

**DEA VIRTUS:
MARTIAL GLORY AS DIVINITY IN THE LITERARY AND VISUAL CULTURE OF ANCIENT ROME**

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Abstract

The Roman goddess Virtus has long been enshrouded in mystery from her cult to her image. Originally an ethical quality meaning “manliness,” *virtus* was deified during the Republic by the general Marcellus, who vowed to create a cult to the goddess during his campaigns against Rome’s foreign enemies. As the founder of the first sanctuary, cult, and temple of Virtus in Rome, Marcellus was religiously contracted to invent an image for his new deity. He selected a mythological Amazon to serve as the model for the temple’s statue of the goddess, whose religious cult became popular with ranking men of the army and, subsequently, with the Roman emperors. However, why did Marcellus establish a cult to Virtus? And why did he choose a seemingly un-Roman, barbaric, bare-breasted, and bellicose Amazon warrior-woman for the divinity of Roman manliness and martial valor – a civilized characteristic that became a badge of honor and esteem for the most powerful men in Rome? The objective of the first half of this dissertation is to shed light on the origins of the cult of Virtus, on the goddess’ unusual image, and on the significance of the goddess in war and politics. Moreover, during the imperial period, the image of Virtus became the sole province of the emperors, inferring that her image continued to be exploited for political purposes. The objective of the second half of this dissertation is to investigate the political and religious significance of Virtus in the visual rhetoric of Roman art during the imperial period, when the goddess was given the performative role of leading the emperor through victory and triumph and, ultimately, to the heavens during his divinization, made possible only by the will of the goddess and her divine gift of martial glory.

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Dedication:

To all the lovely ladies in my life:

my mother Colleen Tabeling

my grandmother Connie Tabeling

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Introduction

Virtus is the badge of the Roman race and pedigree, and usually repels a cruel and dishonorable death, even if nature inevitably brings death to us all. Hold on to it, I beg you fellow Romans, as an inheritance that your ancestors leave for you. Everything else is false and doubtful, ephemeral and fleeting; virtus alone stands most deeply rooted, she can never be shaken by force, nor moved from her place. With virtus, your ancestors first conquered Italy, then destroyed Carthage, overthrew Numantia, and brought the most powerful kings and the most bellicose peoples into the domain of the Roman Empire.

-Cicero, *Philippics* 4.13¹

According to Cicero, in a speech delivered to the citizens of Rome in 43 BCE, *virtus* was responsible for Rome's supremacy, and the construction of Rome's self-image.² The Romans believed that they superseded all enemies in *virtus*; and it was this *virtus* that led the most successful Roman generals of the Republic to honor, victory, glory and eternal fame. In several of his orations, Cicero praises the *virtus* of Rome's most renowned generals: Marcellus, Marius, Sulla, Pompey and especially Caesar. But what was *virtus*? How did the Romans define *virtus*? And why was it so important to the leaders of ancient Rome from the rise of the Republic to the end of the empire?

Roman *virtus* is complex, complicated, and difficult to translate with precision into English, as many scholars have noted before me.³ This is due in part to its polysemic nature – its semantic evolution of its meaning, symptomatic of the changes in the socio-political climate of Rome during the Republic. However, in discussing how the Romans acquired a great empire, Cicero credits *virtus*, with which the Romans were able both to conquer their barbarian enemies and evade an inglorious death. By analogy, Cicero has given us not only the primary definition of *virtus* since the time of Rome's earliest forefathers

* All translations are my own.

¹ *Quamquam mortem quidem natura omnibus proposuit, crudelitatem mortis et dedecus virtus propulsare solet, quae propria est Romani generis et seminis. Hanc retinete, quaeso, Quirites, quam vobis tamquam hereditatem maiores vestri reliquerunt! Nam cum alia omnia falsa, incerta sint, caduca, mobilia, virtus est una altissimis defixa radicibus, quae numquam vi ulla labefactari potest, numquam demoveri loco. Hac [virtute] maiores vestri primum universam Italiam devicerunt, deinde Carthaginem exciderunt, Numantiam everterunt, potentissimos reges, bellicosissimas gentis in dicionem huius imperi redegerunt.*

² McDonnell 2006, 2.

³ Eisenhut 1973, 12-3; Milhous 1992, 48-79, esp. 48-50, 78-9; McDonnell 2006, 2; Sarsila, 2006, 25-30.

who conquered Italy, Carthage, and Numantia with their *virtus*, namely “martial excellence,” but also the ultimate reward of having *virtus*: martial glory and eternal fame.

The word *virtus* etymologically derives from the Latin word *vir* (man), and the Indo-European suffix *-tut*, indicative of the state of being, or the form of existence.⁴ Thus, *virtus*, a feminine noun, signifies the state of being a man. However, *virtus* is not a characteristic of just any man, but rather a male citizen living in a highly militaristic society, whose duty it was to serve in the military and defend the *patria* from the threat of the enemy, since physical prowess and courage remained central to the definition of Roman masculinity.⁵ Therefore, Rome’s success and greatness throughout her history is predicated on the excellence of the military, attested by Cicero above. And the earliest literary usage of the term *virtus* attests to its martial characteristic. In his comedies, Plautus ascribes *virtus* to several militaristic characters who exemplify their martial excellence, prowess, and bravery on the battlefield – the manliest characteristics of all.⁶

By the end of the 3rd century BCE, the definition of *virtus* as “martial valor” was reinforced by the deification of the quality: Virtus. The first cult and temple of Virtus, along with that of the god Honos, were vowed by the consular general Marcus Claudius Marcellus after his victory over the Gauls in 222 BCE.⁷ Unfortunately, there exist no representations of the deity Virtus from the 3rd century BCE to express her original characteristics that would have befitted the personification of manliness. Fortunately, a lineal descendant of Marcellus named Marcellinus issued the earliest coin featuring the deified Virtus from the late-2nd century BCE. Virtus is conceptualized as an Amazon warrior who carries a spear and wears a crested helmet and a short, belted Amazonian tunic.⁸ The fact that Marcellinus was a

⁴ Eisenhut 1973, 12-3. For example, the words *senectus* and *iuentus* indicate the state of being an old man and the state of youth respectively.

⁵ Balmaceda 2005, 23-4.

⁶ McDonnell 2006, 16-32; Sarsila 2006, 39-55.

⁷ Liv. 27.25.7-10; Val. Max. 1.1.8; McDonnell 2006, 212.

⁸ RRC 329 (Crawford 1974, 329); *BMCR* i.1704-24, Pl. 32.10 (Grueber erroneously dates to 89 BCE); *RE* (Wissowa) Cornelius, 230. Notably, the obverse features a youthful Hercules, who, as Cicero recounts, wins his immortality as a result of his *virtus*: Cicero, *Pro Sestio* 143. See full discussion of the Marcellinus denarius below.

direct descendant of Marcellus lends credence to the probability that the original cult statue of Virtus was the archetypal model for his numismatic representation of Virtus in deference to his famous forefather and founder of the cult of Virtus. Therefore, it is possible to recreate the likeness of the earliest representation of Virtus, whose bellicose costume and weapons embody her purely martial character, mostly likely imagined by Marcellus himself to place in the temple he constructed for the goddess right before his death in 208 BCE.

Subsequently, the general Marius constructed a new temple to the deified Virtus in Rome in the 90s BCE, presumably to fulfill a vow to the martial goddess made before battle against the Germans in 102.⁹ In 70, an issue of a denarius featuring the jugate heads of Honos and Virtus was created by a certain Mucius, who may have been the architect of Marius' Temple of Honos and Virtus, according to Vitruvius.¹⁰ The helmeted Virtus is identified by her legend *VIR*, rendering this image the earliest labeled image of the goddess in history. Moreover, in 55 BCE, Pompey the Great consecrated several shrines *in summa cavea* of his theater, one of which was dedicated to Virtus, on behalf of his own military *virtus*.

Conversely, Julius Caesar abstained from dedicating a temple to Virtus, most likely because there were already three preexisting cults of Virtus in Rome founded by three great military predecessors. However, *virtus* became the cardinal theme of Caesar's own commentaries on the Gallic Wars, in which the definition of *virtus* is predictably consistent, meaning "military excellence."¹¹ In *de Bello Gallico*, Caesar lauds not only the *virtus* of his own soldiers, but also the *virtus* of his Gallic adversaries.¹² By acknowledging the *virtus* of the barbarian enemies, the *virtus* of the Roman army greatly increased as a result of defeating their formidable opponents, because it made those victories that much more impressive.¹³ Although Caesar never directly invokes the goddess Virtus, we can still

⁹ McDonnell 2006, 275.

¹⁰ Vitruvius 3.2.5; 7, praef. 17.

¹¹ *Ibid* 301.

¹² Sarsila 2006, 101-11.

¹³ McDonnell 2006, 302-3.

glean from his commentaries that his battles and campaigns are presented as contests in *virtus*, in which the army with the greater *virtus* becomes victorious and, consequently, the conquered surrender their *virtus* altogether.¹⁴ In return for defeating the *virtus* of the enemy on the battlefield, Caesar makes it clear that safety, security and peace prevail in Rome; and, moreover, that the victor be conferred honor, fame, and glory, the virtues of which were presented to the people during his triumph.

The goddess Virtus does not appear again until the principate of Augustus, when his moneyer issued the first imperial coin to feature Virtus, ca. 19 BCE.¹⁵ On the reverse, Augustus rides in a chariot pulled by two elephants and holds a laurel branch in his right hand – the iconography of triumph. This denarius clearly commemorates his triumphs for his victories over Actium, Egypt, and Illyricum in 29 BCE, predicated on his *virtus* that was emblemized by the image of Virtus on the obverse.

From the time of Augustus until the prohibition of polytheism in the 4th century CE, the image of the goddess Virtus became very popular with the emperor of Rome. Her image was largely controlled by the emperors, as the goddess was mainly depicted in monumental relief sculpture and numismatics, both meant to be viewed by the public in association with the emperors.¹⁶ The great extent of her image across the city of Rome and on imperial monuments across the empire, coupled with the fact that every single emperor who minted coins from the time of Augustus to Constantine (with the exception of Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius) minted images of Virtus, indicates that *virtus* was not only desirable to the emperors, but necessary. But why was *virtus* for the emperors necessary and why did *virtus* have to be so frequently publicized in Roman iconography as a principal imperial virtue on so many public monuments in Rome and abroad?

¹⁴ McDonnell 2006, 303.

¹⁵ Babelon 1885-1886, 216, no. 12; *RIC* 1² *Aug.* 301; *BMCR* 2.4545; *BMCRE* 1.36-7; Stevenson 1982, 880; Jones 1990, 322; *CNR* 34-5 (Banti 1973, 179).

¹⁶ The image of Virtus was certainly the province of the emperor until the second half of the 2nd century CE, when we start to see images of the goddess on sarcophagi and votive offerings in the western provinces.

This dissertation will examine the martial concept of Roman *virtus* and its military deity Virtus from the creation of her cult and image in the 3rd century BCE until the last images of the goddess were produced in Rome in the 4th century CE – the only ancient divinity where we know exactly when, why, and by whom it was created. My thesis elucidates the reason why Virtus was conceived as a barbarian Amazon goddess by Marcellus in the 3rd century BCE and why his understanding of *virtus* and how it functioned in the political sphere of the Republic influenced Caesar’s definition of *virtus* in *de Bello Gallico*, and, subsequently, every emperor thereafter. I argue that *virtus* became a political factor in achieving and maintaining power. Marcellus made it clear that *honos*, or political office, and *virtus*, military excellence, were inextricably linked when he founded the cult of Honos and Virtus in Rome. Rising in rank in Roman politics depended on a man’s *virtus*. And the only conceivable way to acquire *virtus* was to demonstrate your military capabilities on the battlefield and emerge victorious. *Virtus* was the key not only to political success, but also to fame and eternal glory, according to Cicero and demonstrated by Caesar. During the empire, *honos* was no longer as important as it used to be when equal men could vie for equal political offices, because there was no higher office than an emperor with *imperium* and tribunician power. However, to maintain imperial power, the emperors felt pressured to demonstrate their *virtus*, or martial excellence, to the Roman people. I argue that, during the empire, the image of the goddess Virtus was exploited by the emperor as political propaganda in order to convey to the people that he was a man of *virtus* through his courageous military exploits, campaigns, and victories. The visual rhetoric of the emperor’s *virtus* displayed on public monuments promised safety and security under his sovereignty. Moreover, the people’s recognition of the emperor’s *virtus* and their familiarity with the divine image of *virtus* that promised stability in Rome validated his competency as protector of the people and legitimized his rule and power. Therefore, the publicity of the goddess Virtus was meant to be visually transactional and beneficial both to the Roman viewer and to the emperor. In return for the emperor’s promise of perpetual peace, the guarantee of honor, fame,

respect, and eternal memory would certainly be his, predicated on the emperor's *virtus* and its divine image of imperial martial glory: Virtus.

Chapter I

The Origins of the Goddess Virtus: Marcellus and the Deification of Martial Glory

Prologue

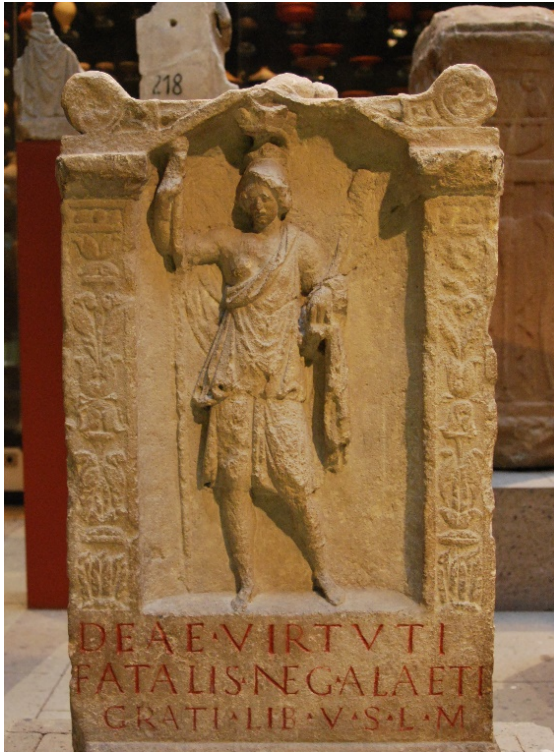


Figure 1: An altar from Germania Inferior dedicated to the goddess Virtus, ca. 3rd century CE. Römisch-Germanisches Museum, Cologne, Germany.

In 1846, a small altar made of local limestone was unearthed in Bocklemünd, Germany, just outside of modern Cologne (ancient Colonia Agrippinensis in Germania Inferior), dating to the 3rd century CE (Fig. 1).¹ The altar is defined by its scrolled *mensa* (altar table) with a central *focus* – a recessed hearth used for sacrificial burning. On one side of the altar, a niche was carved out in which stands Dea Virtus. Her identification is attested by the Latin inscription below (*DEAE VIRTUTI*), thus rendering this one of only three extant representations of the goddess Virtus in relief sculpture from antiquity with unequivocal certainty.² Virtus, bearing weight on

her right leg, with her left relaxed and bent at the knee, is dressed in a single-belted tunic that divests her right breast. The tunic, which clings to her thighs in order to emphasize her physiognomy, is short and drapes to the knees, exposing her shins down to the cuff of her boots. A drill has been used to give the

¹ CIL 8.8513. Espérandieu 1922, 315. Once in the Darmstadt Museum, it is now located in the Römisch-Germanisches Museum in Cologne. The date is provided by the Römisch-Germanisches Museum, Inv. No. 29.21; 110 cm X 70 cm X 35 cm.

² DEAE • VIRTUTI
FATALIS • NEG • ALAETI
GRATI • LIB • V • S • L • M

Deae Virtuti Fatalis Neg(otiator) Alae Ti(berii) Grati Lib(ertus) V(otum) S(olvit) L(ibens) M(erito). “Fatalis, the trader of the military squadron and freedman of Tiberius Gratus, fulfilled his vow willingly and deservedly to the goddess Virtus.” This transcription was first proposed by Buchhold (1895, 25). Nothing is known about the life of Fatalis except the fact that he was a former slave and merchant of an *ala* – a special-forces unit comprised exclusively of cavalry, which flanked the legion in battle formation, cf. Olcott 1904, 216. The other two reliefs come from Britannia and are discussed below.

folds in her tunic a voluminous quality around her midriff. In her right hand, she brandishes a reverse spear, demonstrative of a *Standmotiv*, or idle state. In her left hand, she carries a *parazonium* –the short-sword of hand-to-hand combat, but also a symbol of honor and distinction, more ceremonial and theatrical than practical, hence her cradling gesture of the parazonium in the crook of her arm.³ Crowning her head is a helmet with a decorative crest. The niche in which Virtus stands is framed by two pilasters surmounted by square capitals. The pilasters, both ornamented with vegetal motifs carved in low relief, support a pitched roof – the architectonic characteristics of an *aedicula* (small shrine), which indicates that this representation of Dea Virtus is, in fact, a representation of a religious cult statue.

Another limestone relief, albeit terribly weathered, was discovered in Aquincum, Pannonia



Figure 2: Limestone relief of Virtus from Pannonia Inferior, ca. 3rd century CE. Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, Hungary.

Inferior, just outside of Budapest, Hungary, now housed in the Lapidarium Museum in Budapest. Based on a comparative analysis of style and form with the Cologne Virtus, the Budapest Virtus should date to roughly the same time period (**Fig. 2**).⁴ The relief does not have a complementary inscription; however, the figure on the relief exhibits all of the same characteristics as the Cologne Virtus, making the identity of the figure transparent: Dea Virtus. Once again, Virtus is displayed in a *Standmotiv*, with her weight distributed to her right leg, freeing her left leg, bent at the knee. She wears a short, double-belted tunic that exposes both her right breast and her legs below her thighs, revealing her

³ Martial *Epigrams* 14.32; Mattingly 1930, xci.

⁴ Nagy 2012, 20. Located in the Hungarian National Museum, Budapest. Inv. No. 63.1878.2; 97 cm X 55 X 25.

Both of these reliefs exemplify the iconography of Dea Virtus – an Amazonian goddess of pure martial quality. By the 3rd century CE, the time in which these reliefs were produced, her attributes became canonical. Her helmet, her belted tunic, her bare right breast, and her choice of weapon, typically a parazonium and/or a spear, became the standardized military attributes of her martial character. The Budapest Virtus does, however, attest to the existence of slight variations in her iconography. The sculptor opted to exchange a spear for a vexillum on this relief, which has been proposed by Nagy to have come from a banner-shrine in the *castra* at Aquincum, since the reverse of the relief is rounded off in order to

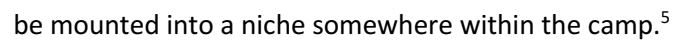


Figure 3: Limestone altar dedicated to Honos and Virtus by L. Ulpius Marcellus, ca. 260 CE. Lapidarium Museum, Budapest, Hungary.

⁷ Nagy 2012, 164.

weathered inscription reads: *VIRTUTI ET HONORI L ULPIUS MARCELLUS LEG AUG PR PR PANNON INF V S*: “Lucius Ulpus Marcellus, Governor of Pannonia Inferior fulfilled his vow to Virtus and to Honos.”⁸ No images of Virtus or Honos were created for this votive (unless they were once represented as acroteria); however, the two sides of the monument are figural. On the left side, a winged Victoria alights on a globe, drapery windblown against her body (**Fig. 4**). She holds a *corona triumphalis* in her right hand against her chest, and embraces a palm branch in her left, another emblem of triumph. On the right side, an assertive soldier, dressed in full military uniform (tunic, cuirass, *paludamentum*, boots, and a crested helmet) lifts his spear with his right hand and proudly stands on top of his adversary’s legs, while bearing down his shield upon his head as an act of subjugation (**Fig. 5**). The proud soldier could be none other than Lucius Ulpus Marcellus



Figure 4: Detail of Victoria.



Figure 5: Detail of Lucius Ulpus Marcellus.

himself, the vow-fulfiller and suppliant of the two gods Virtus and Honos respectively. The votive altar was doubtless dedicated to these two deities as a thank-offering for the victory he received after conquering his adversaries, attested by the manifestation of Victoria and the fallen enemy on the other. The presence of Victoria among the invoked gods Honos and Virtus, venerated by the military governor Lucius Ulpus Marcellus, represents a tripartite political-religious bond shared among these three

⁸ *Virtuti et Honori L(ucius) Ulpus Marcellus leg(atus) Aug(usti) pr(o) pr(aetore) Pannon(iae) inf(erioris) v(otum) s(olvit)*. Lucius Ulpus Marcellus should not be confused with Ulpus Marcellus, governor of Britannia in the 2nd century CE.

divinities, who, when presented together, formulate a martial triad emblematic of Roman military supremacy.

Unfortunately, nothing is known about Lucius Ulpius Marcellus himself save for the fact that he was once governor of Pannonia Inferior in the 260s. However, that Lucius Ulpius Marcellus shares his cognomen, and, therefore, his pedigree, with the luminary Republican general Marcus Claudius Marcellus is no coincidence. Marcus Claudius Marcellus was the first Roman to not only vow a temple to the gods Honos and Virtus during the Battle of Clastidium in 222 BCE and, again, during the Siege of Syracuse in 212, but he was also the inventor of Virtus' cult and image in Rome in 208. The original cult statue of Virtus that once stood in Marcellus' Republican temple no longer exists. However, using the iconography of both the Cologne Virtus and the Budapest Virtus, we can retroactively trace her image back through five centuries of Roman reproductions of her likeness in order to reconstruct Marcellus' archetypal Virtus. Marcellus' archetypal Virtus was borrowed by subsequent Romans to represent Dea Virtus – a seemingly un-Roman, barbaric, bare-breasted, and bellicose Amazonian warrior-woman, who, having spanned five hundred years of Roman history, paradoxically became the divine representative of Roman masculinity, martial valor, and bravery, as well as a badge of honor and glory for not only the greatest generals of the Republic, but also for the emperors of Rome.

I.I. The Battle at Clastidium

*More and more religious scruples, weighing heavy on his mind, were restraining Marcellus, one in particular, in which, after he had vowed a temple to Honos and Virtus at Clastidium during the Gallic War, his dedication was obstructed by the pontiffs.*⁹

- Livy 27.25

The earliest surviving *testimonium* of the consecration of the cult of Virtus comes from this laconic passage in *Ab Urbe Condita*, in which Livy, while explicating the pontifical reason why Marcellus was obstructed from dedicating his single-cella temple to two deities in the year 208 BCE, recounts the event that elicited Marcellus' original vow to the two deities Honos and Virtus – the Battle at Clastidium against the Gauls in 222 BCE.¹⁰ Unfortunately, the precise motive for Marcellus' oath invoking Honos and Virtus remains conjectural, not only because the annals covering the year 222 in *Ab Urbe Condita* are lost, but also because our two other ancient sources on the Battle at Clastidium, Polybius and Plutarch, remain completely silent on the matter.¹¹ However, by examining all historical accounts of Marcellus' life and career, I will present the reasons why, I believe, Marcellus pledged to honor not only Honos, the divine Virtue of honor (both universal esteem, and the honor of holding an appointment in public office), but also Virtus, the divinity of military excellence and, above all, martial glory. Moreover, I will demonstrate that Marcellus himself created Virtus' Amazonian image in order to visually exemplify his own congenital

⁹ *Marcellum aliae atque aliae obiectae animo religiones tenebant, in quibus quod, cum bello Gallico ad Clastidium aedem Honori et Virtuti vovisset, dedicatio eius a pontificibus impediabatur.* Cf. Feraco 2017, pp. 321-6 for commentary.

¹⁰ For the Germans, cf. the *Fasti Triumphales* for the year 222/1 BCE created by Augustus in 19 BCE (Degraasi, *Fasti Capitolini* 1954). Marcellus' original vow is recounted again by Livy at 29.11.13; Plut. (*Marc.* 28) asserts that Marcellus, heeding the pontiffs, began to build a second temple adjoining the first. On Plutarch's passage, cf. also Clark's commentary (1981, 341-6). Val. Max. (1.1.8) states that Marcellus was obligated by the pontiffs to place his statues of Honos and Virtus (*Honoris ac Virtutis simulacra*) in two separate shrines. The earliest surviving reference of the temple of Virtus was made by Cicero in three instances, albeit all in passing: in *De Re Pub.* 1.21, Cicero recounts that the globe engineered by Archimedes was placed in the temple of Virtus by Marcellus (*Archimede factam posuerat in templo Virtutis Marcellus idem*) after the Siege of Syracuse; in *Verr.* 2, 1.121, Cicero mentions that the spoils of Syracuse were brought into the temple of Honos and Virtus (*ad aedem Honoris et Virtutis*); in *Verr.* 2, 1.121, Cicero specifies that Marcellus vowed to dedicate two temples in Rome if he captured Syracuse, one to Honos and one to Virtus (*Et Marcellus qui, si Syracusas cepisset, duo templa se Romae dedicaturum voverat...Honoris...Virtuti*).

¹¹ On the historical evidence on the Battle of Clastidium, see Livy 27.25, 29.11.13-4; Val. Max. 1.1.8; Polyb. 2.21-34; Front. *Strat.* 4.4; Plut. *Marc.* 6.6-7; and the *Fasti Triumphales*, yr. 222/1 BCE.

quality *virtus* – his gift of martial valor on the battlefield – which led Marcellus down an unbeaten path to honor, respect, glory, and eternal fame.¹²

Marcus Claudius Marcellus carved a name for himself on the tableau of Roman collective memory between the years 222 and 208, in which he not only held consulships five times, praetorship two times, proconsulship two times, and membership in the college of augurs for two decades, but he also contracted two vows to honor Honos and Virtus with a temple in Rome, won the *spolia opima*, defeated the Gauls, routed Hannibal, celebrated a triumph in Rome, another on the Alban Mount, as well as an *ovatio* in 212 after the Sack of Syracuse.¹³ All of these accomplishments secured Marcellus' reputation of manliness, bravery, and leadership for posterity. After his death, his fame became legacy and later inspired Plutarch to compose Marcellus' deferential biography, in which he designated Marcellus as the "Sword of Rome."¹⁴ But, how was it possible for Marcellus, a plebeian, to forge such a distinguished *cursus honorum*? It was Marcellus' intrinsic *virtus* that made him a legend. His martial valor paved the way to his political success (his *honos*). Moreover, it was Marcellus' sense of religious duty, his *religio*, that compelled him to revere his political and martial ethos, i.e. his *honos* and his *virtus*, from the moment he achieved them until his death in 208 BCE.

¹² For *virtus* as "martial valor," cf. McDonnell 2003, 235-262 and 2006, esp. 72-141 and Sarsila (2006). The semantic borrowing of ἀνδρεία and ἀρετή, and the polysemic meaning of *virtus* will have a place in my dissertation; however, the complexity of the meaning of *virtus* during the late Republic is beyond the scope of my dissertation and has already been painstakingly discussed by Eisenhut (1973), McDonnell (2006), Sarsila (2006), and Balmaceda (2017). The works of McDonnell, Sarsila, and Balmaceda are the most extensive works on the meaning of *virtus* during the Roman Republic, all stemming from the foundational work on *virtus* written by Eisenhut, whose monograph is the starting point for all scholars interested in *virtus* as a moral quality rather than a martial one. The goddess Virtus, however, has always represented a martial quality, never a moral one. Mattingly (1950, xlv, clxv) postulates that the Greek equivalent of Virtus is Πῶμη (Romē, Stength), which is why Virtus is indistinguishable from Roma on some imperial coins. However, the Amazonian iconography of Virtus predates that of Roma; and, moreover, Greek depictions of Virtus, of which there are only two, are labeled "Andreia." Therefore, Virtus is not a "tutela" of the city and is not an equivalent of Roma, as Mattingly suggests.

¹³ McCall 2012, 133; *Fasti Triumphales*, yr. 222/1; Polyb. 2.34.5-9; Plut. *Marc.* 6-9; *Fab. Max.* 19; Asconius *In Pisonem* 11C; *Rom.* 16.7-8; *Comp. Pelop. and Marc.* 1.2; Val. Max. 3.2.5; Cic. *Tusc.* 4.49; Livy *Per.* 20; Verg. *Aen.* 6.855-9; Prop. 4.10; Manil. *Ast.* 1.787-8; Fest. 204L; Sil. *Pun.* 1.133, 3.587, 12.278-80; Front. *Strat.* 4.5.4; Florus 1.20.4; Eutropius 3.6; Ampel 21; *vir. ill.* 45; Oros 4.13.15.

¹⁴ Plut. *Marc.* 9; *Fab. Max.* 19.

Marcellus was born around the year 268 into the *gens* Claudii Marcelli – a minor plebeian family involved in Roman politics for less than a century.¹⁵ Approximately 83 years before the birth of Marcellus, a former Marcus Claudius Marcellus was appointed consul in 351, and dictator in 321.¹⁶ His son, another former Marcus Claudius Marcellus, held the consulship in 287 – the last family member of the *gens* Claudii Marcelli to hold public office before our Marcellus in the 220s.¹⁷ Unfortunately, nothing is known about Marcellus' father due to the paucity of extant biographical information.¹⁸ That Marcellus' father never held political office is plausible, perhaps due to a premature death.¹⁹ Marcellus did, however, have political ancestors, thereby disassociating him from the designation *novus homo*, yet Marcellus was still obligated to climb the rungs of the political ladder on his own if he were ever to achieve political prestige.

Fortunately for Marcellus, he developed a natural talent in combat warfare, which he used as leverage to curry favor with the military elite.²⁰ In his youth, Marcellus was renowned as an outstanding duelist in hand-to-hand combat.²¹ As a budding soldier in the First Punic War, Marcellus had procured many garlands and accolades from his commanders for his displays of courage, one, in particular, for rescuing his younger half-brother Titus Otacilius Crassus from the danger of an enemy incursion at Syracuse.²² Marcellus' aptitude in battle helped establish his reputation as a gifted warrior imbued with *virtus*, which he summoned to his advantage in 39 battles over the course of his lifetime, as recounted by Pliny, just 11 shy of Caesar's record number. Plutarch adduces that no other Roman had ever won more victories than Marcellus, who divvied up his glory with no one.²³

¹⁵ McCall 2012, 1.

¹⁶ Livy 8.18; Plut. *Marc.* 1.

¹⁷ Livy 8.23.

¹⁸ McCall 2012, 7.

¹⁹ McCall 2012, 7.

²⁰ Plut. *Marc.* 2.

²¹ Plut. *Marc.* 2.

²² Plut. *Marc.* 2; Flower 2014, 288 no. 11; McCall, 2012, 1.

²³ Pliny *NH* 7.92; Plut. *Comp. Pelop. Marc.* 2.

Because of Marcellus' reputed courage displayed in battle during the First Punic War, he was elected by the assembly of the people as curule aedile, his first political appointment, sometime between 228 and 225.²⁴ The honor of holding the magistracy of curule aedile would lay the foundation of his future career as a politician and commander of the army, amplifying his status from a colorless plebeian to a member of the governing body of Rome.²⁵ Like many of his aristocratic contemporaries, Marcellus vied for offices and honors in the arena of politics and elections. Plutarch attests that Marcellus' martial prowess was sufficient to get him elected not only to public office, but also to a distinguished position in state religion as an augur in the collegiate priesthood for life.²⁶ Marcellus' rapid ascension into the political and religious apparatus of the Republic seems to have stemmed from the events of 225 – the year in which the Gallic Insubres invaded Italy, accompanied by their barbarian mercenaries, the Gaesatae, and, likely, the Germans, according to the *Fasti Triumphales*.²⁷ Plutarch recalls that Rome was once again summoned to the front line of battle against the Gauls.²⁸ Approximately two centuries earlier, the Gallic Senones sacked and burned Rome in 390 – a declaration of eternal enmity between the Romans and the Gauls.²⁹ Plutarch recounts that, because of the Sack of Rome in 390, Rome feared no race more than the Gauls, who were again infringing on the boundaries of the *patria*.³⁰ With the barbarians at the borders, Rome had no choice but to respond to the threat of another domestic war by dispatching the Roman

²⁴ Plut. *Marc.* 2; McCall, 2012, 6.

²⁵ McCall 2012, 2.

²⁶ Plut. *Marc.* 2.

²⁷ For the year 222/1 BCE, the *Fasti Triumphales* published by Augustus in 19 BCE, reads: *M. Claudius M. f. M. n. Marcellus an. DXX[XI] cos. de Galleis Insubribus et Germ[an(eis)] | k. Mart. isque spolia opima rettu[lit] | duce hostium Viridumaro ad Clastid[ium] | [interfecto];* "Marcus Claudius Marcellus, son of Marcus, grandson of Marcus, was consul in the year 531 [=222] at [the Battle at] Clastidium against the Gallic Insubres and the Germans, after which he brought back the *spolia opima* of the enemy's king Viridomarus;" Degraffi 1963, 13.179. The *Fasti Triumphales*, located in the Capitoline Museums, is the earliest ancient source to use the term "Germans" with respect to the Battle of Clastidium. Moreover, in other ancient sources, the tribes of the Gauls and of the Germans are often conflated and indistinguishable. Often, we think of Gaul as being modern France and Germania as modern Germany, but there were no such organized borders during the Republic. These itinerant tribes, spanning regions of modern France, northern Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, and Hungary, often crossed paths, interacted, and coalesced.

²⁸ Plut. *Marc.* 3.

²⁹ McCall 2012, 7.

³⁰ Plut. *Marc.* 3.

legions commanded by her co-consuls of 222, Gaius Cornelius Scipio and Marcellus, who had already proven his military excellence during the First Punic War.

In 225, the Insubres, their allies the Boii, and the Gaesatae descended into the Po Valley with a united force of 50,000 infantry and 20,000 cavalry and chariots – the largest concerted Gallic force in history.³¹ The Romans managed to raise two powerful consular armies against the Gauls; and Lucius Aemilius' forces almost completely eradicated the Gauls on the coast of Etruria.³² In 223, the consul Flaminius defeated yet another force of Insubrian Gauls in their native territory and they surrendered.³³

The Insubres sent ambassadors to Rome in order to appeal to the senate for an armistice in 222. This was the same year in which Marcellus won his first consulship, likely due to his talent in combat.³⁴ Polybius proclaims that both Marcellus and his fellow co-consul Cornelius Scipio repudiated the Insubres' conciliatory peace-treaty and insisted that the war continue; however, Plutarch claims that it was Marcellus alone who emboldened the popular assembly to demand a continuation of war.³⁵ But why rekindle an unnecessary war, if not for the opportunity to acquire glory through *virtus*? If Marcellus were to live up to his burgeoning reputation as a valiant soldier during the First Punic War, suing for an extension of the Gallic War would have created an opportunity for him to affirm his *virtus* once again on the battlefield, not only as a new consul of Rome, but also as an emergent general of the consular legions. If the armistice were to have been respected, Marcellus would never have had the prospect, at the time, to obtain esteem from his senatorial colleagues. This was Marcellus' chance to propel his career forward by proving himself a leader both on the senate floor and on the battlefield, particularly since the duration of a consulship was limited to a one-year term. A year of peace was tantamount to a year of socio-political insignificance for a politician's reputation and renown. Moreover, most Romans who were elected to the

³¹ Polyb. 2.23.

³² Ward 2003, 104; Polyb. 2.30-1.

³³ Polyb. 2.32-3; Livy *Per.* 20.8-10.

³⁴ Polyb. 2.34.

³⁵ Polyb. 2.34; Plut. *Marc.* 6.

senate, very likely, would never hold consulship again, suggesting that elected statesmen must have felt compelled to make the most of their one year in office, especially since no surer road to glory existed than to be successful in warfare.³⁶ Thus, the war continued.³⁷

In the spring of 222, both Marcellus and Cornelius Scipio launched their campaign and led their legions to the territory of the Insubres in Cisalpine Gaul. There, they besieged the Insubrian town of Acerrae nestled between the Alps and the Po Valley near the Insubrian capital of Mediolanum (Milan), precluding any Gallic reinforcements from providing direct assistance.³⁸ Subsequently, according to Plutarch, the Gallic king Viridomarus led a force of 10,000 Gaesatae into the Po Valley where it ravaged the countryside.³⁹ Plutarch recounts that when Marcellus caught wind of the destruction, he left Cornelius Scipio, all of the heavy infantry, and one-third of the Roman cavalry at Acerrae in order to pursue the Gaesatae on his own, escorted by the light infantry and two-thirds of the cavalry.⁴⁰ They marched without rest until they reached the village of Clastidium, where the Gaesatae had settled.⁴¹ Or, according to Polybius, Marcellus reached Clastidium – an *oppidum* belonging to the Anares, allies of Rome – which was besieged by a Gallic force of 10,000.⁴² In either case, the Gallic forces at Clastidium, most likely consisting of both Celtic and Germanic tribes, immediately attacked the Romans.⁴³ The Gauls charged on Marcellus, believing that their greater force would successfully rout the Romans. Marcellus tried to outflank the Gauls with his cavalry, extending its wing into a thin line. Just as Marcellus was turning inward to counterattack, the barbarity of the enemy frightened his horse, forestalling Marcellus' advance. However, Marcellus stabilized his horse with the reins, and recalibrated his attack lest this calamity be interpreted

³⁶ McCall 2012, 18.

³⁷ Polyb. 2.34; Plut. *Marc.* 6.

³⁸ Polyb. 2.34; Plut. *Marc.* 6.

³⁹ Plut. (*Marc.* 6) erroneously names the Gallic king Britomartus.

⁴⁰ The size of the cavalry is calculated by McCall (2012, 19).

⁴¹ Plut. *Marc.* 6.

⁴² Polyb. 2.34.

⁴³ Plut. *Marc.* 6.

by his army as an unfavorable omen. Marcellus was afraid that such an omen would affect his standing with his soldiers, demonstrating that a reputation in martial valor, or *virtus*, was his primary concern.

Subsequently, Marcellus made several vows. First, he vowed to dedicate the Gallic king's most attractive set of armor to Jupiter Feretrius, the "Oath-Bearer."⁴⁴ According to Plutarch, the Gallic king Viridomarus – loftier than any other Gaul, and outstanding both in his armor of gold and silver and in his variegated embroideries – recognized Marcellus as commander of the Roman forces from his Roman insignia. Brandishing a spear, Viridomarus confronted Marcellus and challenged him to a duel. Marcellus struck Viridomarus' chest, piercing his cuirass. Viridomarus tumbled off his horse and crashed to the ground; and while he was still gasping for air, Marcellus delivered the *coup de grâce*. Having leapt off his horse, Marcellus placed his hand upon Viridomarus' armor and enunciated his vow to Jupiter Feretrius.⁴⁵

Marcellus' victory over Viridomarus granted him one of the most prestigious military honors conferred upon a Roman general, the *spolia opima*, or the supreme spoils of war – the armor of the Gallic king, which Marcellus vowed to Jupiter Feretrius.⁴⁶ The armor of the king was mounted upon an oak trunk as a trophy and paraded into the city of Rome by Marcellus, who installed it in the Temple of Jupiter Feretrius on the Capitoline Hill as a reminder of this rare and extraordinary accomplishment.⁴⁷ The Temple of Jupiter Feretrius was, putatively, the oldest shrine in Rome, consecrated by Romulus, who himself legendarily won the *spolia opima* by defeating King Acron of the Caeninenses.⁴⁸ In the 5th century BCE, A.

⁴⁴ Plut. *Marc.* 6; on the cult of Jupiter Feretrius cf. Springer 1954.

⁴⁵ Plut. *Marc.* 7: "Oh, Jupiter Feretrius, who retains the great deeds and acts of generals and commanders in warfare, I call you as a witness that I have defeated and killed this man with my own hand, being the third Roman general to kill a leader and king, and I vow to you the first and most resplendent of the spoils. I beg that you again grant us similar fortune as we continue our fight in this war:" Ὡς μεγάλα στρατηγῶν καὶ ἡγεμόνων ἔργα καὶ πράξεις ἐπιβλέπων ἐν πολέμοις καὶ μάχαις φερέτριε Ζεῦ, μαρτύρομαί σε Ῥωμαίων τρίτος ἄρχων ἄρχοντα καὶ βασιλέα στρατηγὸς ἰδίᾳ χειρὶ τόνδε τὸν ἄνδρα κατεργασάμενος καὶ κτείνας σοι καθιεροῦν τὰ πρῶτα καὶ κάλλιστα τῶν λαφύρων. σὺ δὲ δίδου τύχην ὁμοίαν ἐπὶ τὰ λοιπὰ τοῦ πολέμου προτρεπομένοις.

⁴⁶ The definition and significance of the *spolia opima* is explicated by Plut. (*Marc.* 8). For a thorough examination of the *spolia opima*, cf. Flower 2014, 285-320.

⁴⁷ Flower 2014, 285.

⁴⁸ Flower 2014, 285; For Cossus, cf. Cic. *Rep.* 2.7.12 – 2.10.17; Livy 1.10; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.34.4; Prop. 4.10; Plut. *Rom.* 16; Val. Max. 3.2.3; Serv. *Aen.* 6.859.

Cornelius Cossus was reported to have been the second Roman commander to acquire the *spolia opima* and its prestige, thus rendering Marcellus the third.⁴⁹

According to Livy, sometime over the course of the battle, Marcellus also pledged a vow to Honos and Virtus: “since, during the Gallic War at Clastidium, he vowed a temple to Honos and Virtus.” However, Livy does not specify whether the vow was a *supplicatio* (a precautionary supplication), or a *postvotum* (a thank-offering).⁵⁰ More surprisingly, neither of the Greek historians on Marcellus, Polybius nor Plutarch, references Marcellus’ vow to Honos and Virtus. That the vow is only reported by the Latin historians Livy and Valerius Maximus, as male Roman citizens living under the aegis of a militarized society and governed by the Roman state, is not surprising. Livy and Valerius Maximus would have been more familiar with the significance of vowing oaths to Virtues than their Greek counterparts, who may not have fully understood the Roman deifications of the god of Roman political offices, Honos, and the goddess of martial valor, Virtus, for which there were no exact Greek equivalents.⁵¹ This can be corroborated by the fact that Plutarch translates *virtus* as ἀρετή and *honos* as δόξα (fame) when he discusses the Temple of Honos and Virtus (ναὸν...Δόξης καὶ Ἀρετῆς:), which are not parallel virtues.⁵² Plutarch’s use of ἀρετή for *virtus* is demonstrative of the fact that he did not fully understand the qualitative difference between the Greek quality of ἀρετή as “moral excellence” and *virtus* as “military excellence,” more closely related to the Greek ἀνδρεία (i.e. manliness).⁵³ Nevertheless, neither Livy nor Valerius Maximus detail the exact moment in which Marcellus pledged his vow to Honos and Virtus.

⁴⁹ Flower 2014, 285; Livy 4.19; Prop. 4.10; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 12.5; Fest. 204L; Val. Max. 3.2.4; Front. *Strat.* 2.8.9; Plut. *Rom.* 16; Serv. *Aed.* 6.841 and 855;

⁵⁰ Livy 27.25: *cum bello Gallico ad Clastidium aedem Honori et Virtuti vovisset*. Livy, being our most authoritative source on state religion during the Republic, classifies three stages of founding a temple; the *locatio* (the placing), *dedicatio* (the dedication), and the *votum* (the vow), the former two being consequences of the latter. Unfortunately, all three classifications are rarely attributed to any one temple in our extant literary sources, and most of the time, a *dedicatio* becomes the synecdochical rite for all three. Moreover, a *votum*, or vow, is classified into three types: a *supplicatio* (a preemptive supplication), a *postvotum* (a thank-offering), and *vota nuncupata* (expiation rites): cf. Ziolkowski 1992, 193-234 for a comprehensive study on founding a temple during the Republic. Cf. also Ziolkowski 1992, 254-5 for an abbreviated list of examples of both propitiatory vows and thank-offering vows.

⁵¹ Livy. 27.25; Val. Max. 1.1.8; For discussion on Greek equivalents, cf. also no. 28 above.

⁵² Plut. *Marc.* 28.

⁵³ Plutarch sometimes uses ἀνδρεία to denote military prowess: e.g. Plut. *Marc.* 22.

Nevertheless, Marcellus honored both Honos, without whose patronage he would never have risen to the ranks of Roman consul and general of the consular army, and also Virtus for having endowed him with his inherent martial abilities. Marcellus knew that promising a temple to deify *honos* and *virtus* would help legitimize his political and martial leadership, leading to more consulships and, therefore, more recognition, fame, and glory. This is evidenced by Cicero, who inquires, “Who among us is able to doubt that the glory of a renowned military record much better carries a man to the acquisition of the Roman consulship than a profession in civil law?”⁵⁴ Therefore, it was no secret to ambitious Republican men that *virtus* conferred *honos*, i.e. that martial valor conferred political offices and esteem. Together, Honos and Virtus provided the necessary assistance Marcellus needed in order to be elected consul of Rome and to secure his victory over the Gauls, which led to the acquisition of both the *spolia opima*, and also to an imminent Roman triumph – the most respected accomplishment accorded to a Roman and the product of his *virtus*.⁵⁵

I.II. Marcellus’ Cult of Honos and Virtus

It was not uncommon for a Roman magistrate of the Republic to pledge dedications such as spoils or entire cults to a god of his own volition in return for receiving political honor, martial glory, and renown from battle – a formulaic *do-ut-des* (literally “I give so that you may give”) religious contract.⁵⁶ That Marcellus contracted a vow to two divine Virtues rather than to Olympian gods is telling of mid-Republican ideals, especially since qualitative deities (or sometimes erroneously referred to as “abstract deities”), such as Honos and Virtus, have often engendered modern misconceptions about their power, nature, and

⁵⁴ Cic. *Pro. Mur.* 22: ...*qui potest dubitari quin ad consulatum adipiscendum multo plus adferat dignitatis rei militaris quam iuris civilis gloria?*

⁵⁵ Polyb. 2; McDonnell 2006, 213. Livy (33.22) refers to a triumph as *honos*, or an “honor” bestowed upon an individual by the senate for his meritorious martial feats in battle, i.e. a product of his *virtus*. For *honos* as the product of *virtus*, cf. Cicero *Rep.* 3.40: “*Virtus* clearly desires *honos*, and there is no other reward for *virtus*” (*Vult plane virtus honorem, nec est virtutis ulla alia merces*); Cic. *Fam.* 14.1.3; Symmachus *Ep.* 1.20.1: “Our ancestors... located the temple of Honos and Virtus, joined together with a twin façade...there the prizes of *honos* were, where the merits of *virtus* are” (...*maiores nostri... aedes Honori atque Virtuti gemella facie iunctim locarunt commenti...ibi esse praemia honoris ubi sunt merita virtutis*).

⁵⁶ McCall 2012, 19; McDonnell 2006, 212.

relationship with the contractor, and are frequently considered less important than the traditional gods of the Roman state.⁵⁷ However, during the middle Republic, honoring and deifying qualities, values, characteristics, and virtues, proliferated, most often contracted by Roman magistrates as a rite of the *do-ut-des* religious principle.

Unlike in Greek religion, the Romans regularly conceptualized natural and supernatural powers as *numina*. These aniconic divine forces were manifest in every animate and inanimate thing, or in deeds created by divine will. Over time, myriad anthropomorphized *numina* were adopted by the Romans in order to visualize these forces, eventually becoming gods. Consequently, the Virtues of men (e.g. Salus, Fortuna, Spes, Honos, Virtus, etc.) were rendered by the Romans as divine forces worshipped on the same scale as the great gods, influenced by, but not always modeled on, Greek Virtues, e.g. Νίκη (Victoria; Victory), Ὁμόνοια (Concordia; Concord), and Δίκη (Iustitia; Justice).⁵⁸ By the end of the 8th century BCE, literary manifestations of Greek qualities appear in the works of Homer and Hesiod, for example: Θάνατος (Thanatos; Death), Ὕπνος (Hypnos; Sleep), Δίκη (Dike; Justice), Εἰρήνη (Eirene; Peace) and Νίκη (Nike; Victory), whereas visual manifestations of these concepts first appear in Greek vase-painting beginning in the 6th century BCE, indicated by either the presence of inscriptions, or the appearance of the figure within

⁵⁷ Here, I agree with Mattingly (1937, 34) and especially Fears (1981a, 830-3), who asserts that “personification” and “abstract idea” are too vague, since Honos, Virtus, and many other gods of virtue were not abstractions, but were rather concrete manifestations with concrete divine powers; cf. also Stafford, whose book *Worshipping Virtues* follows this new school of thought, which defines divine personifications as “Virtues.” Henceforth, since there is a desideratum for a term that best defines the true nature of anthropomorphic deities of human characteristics and concepts, I will follow in the footsteps of Mattingly, Fears, and Stafford in describing the phenomenon of conceptualized Roman deities whose divine power and characteristics are immanent in the actions and attributes of men as divine Virtues. *Contra* Axtell’s (1907) “deified abstract ideas;” *contra* Clark, who, in her 2007 book *Divine Qualities*, prefers the term “qualities,” which, to me, is still too generic, especially since cultic deities like *Moneta*, *Bonus Eventus*, *Tempestates*, and *Fons*, for example, are not qualities, but rather hold ideological value or benefit for the founders of their cults. *Contra* McDonnell (2006, 209, no. 10) who, with good intentions, uses the term “abstract deities” even though “abstract” still does not embody the historical reality of these concrete gods. The Stoics’ designation for these divine beings was *pragmata*, and Cicero alone calls them *utilitates* (*Nat. Deo.* 2.23.62); however, for facility and clarification, I prefer to use an English word for these gods to which “Virtue” is the closest. I do want to note, however, that the word “personification” is both useful and appropriate when describing anthropomorphic conditions in literature and art that did not receive public cult worship, for example: Death (Θάνατος; Mors) and Sleep (Ὕπνος; Somnus), or even geographical concepts, for example: Dacia, Asia, Britannia, Africa, Danuvius, Campus Martius and even Roma in her earliest manifestations. The word “personification” derives from the Greek word *προσωποποιία*, via the Latin words *persona* + *facere*, which was the practice of masking an actor to become another character, cf. Fears 1981a, 830.

⁵⁸ McDonnell 2006, 210; for further discussion on the introduction of abstract deities in Roman religion, cf. Clark 2007; Fears 1981a; Mattingly 1937; Axtell 1907.

a known mythological context.⁵⁹ By the 5th century, Φόβος (Phobos; Fear), Θέμις (Themis; Divine Law), Τύχη (Tyche; Fortune), Ὑγίεια (Hygieia; Health), and Εὐκλεία (Eukleia; Good Repute) received cult worship.⁶⁰ Approximately a century later, the Roman Virtues Salus and Concordia received cultic rites; and, in the 3rd century, Victoria, Fortuna, Spes, Fides, Honos, and Virtus also obtained cult status in Rome.⁶¹ In Book II of *de Natura Deorum*, Cicero, albeit through the voice of the speaker Balbus – a Stoic whose character is intended to argue on behalf of the existence of gods – elucidates the nature of these deified Virtues. He emphasizes their pragmatic powers and abilities, i.e. their *vis* (power; force) and *utilitas* (usefulness; utility), which these divinities bestowed upon those who vowed to honor them and even mentions the Temple of Honos and Virtus.⁶²

Many of the other characteristics of the gods have been acknowledged and named by the wisest Greeks and our ancestors not without reason, but from the great benefits they confer. For, whatever force conferred such great utility on the race of men is thought to be made with divine benevolence towards mankind. And so, whatever power derives from that god is referred to as the name of that god, just as we call grain “Ceres” and wine “Liber,” about which Terence says: ‘without Ceres and Liber, Venus becomes cold.’ However, in other cases, an even greater power is thus referred to as the name of the god, like Fides (Faith) and Mens (Mind), which we can see on the Capitoline Hill dedicated by M. Aemilius Scaurus, whereas the shrine of Fides was consecrated by A. Atilius Calatinus. You can see the Temple of Virtus and that of Honos having been renovated by Marcus Marcellus from its [the Temple of Honos] original dedication by Quintus [Fabius] Maximus many years ago during the Ligurian War. You can see the temples of Ops (Wealth), Salus (Well-Being), Concordia (Concord), Libertas (Freedom) and Victoria (Victory), all of which have power so great that they themselves were able to be designated as gods. This holds true for the names of these gods: Cupid (Love), Voluptas (Desire) and Venus Lubentina (the One Who Pleases), which have all been deified, and even vices and unnatural things (although Velleius believes otherwise). Nevertheless, these same vices often overpower natural forces. Therefore, these gods of great utility owe their deification to the powers they bestowed; and, indeed, in these names of which I have just now spoken lies the power which shares the name of the god who bears it.⁶³

⁵⁹ Fears 1981a, 829-30; Shapiro 1993, 12-24.

⁶⁰ Fears 1981a, 830.

⁶¹ Fears 1981a, 830.

⁶² McDonnell 2006, 210.

⁶³ Cic. *Nat. Deo.* 2.61: *Multae autem aliae naturae deorum ex magnis beneficiis eorum non sine causa et a Graeciae sapientissimis et a maioribus nostris constitutae nominatae que sunt. Quicquid enim magnam utilitatem generi adferret humano, id non sine divina bonitate erga homines fieri arbitrabantur. Itaque tum illud quod erat a deo natum nomine ipsius dei nuncupabant, ut cum fruges Cererem appellamus vinum autem Liberum, ex quo illud Terentii: sine Cerere et Libero friget Venus, tum autem res ipsa in qua vis inest maior aliqua sic appellatur ut ea ipsa nominetur deus, ut Fides, ut Mens, quas in Capitolio dedicatas videmus proxime a M. Aemilio Scauro, ante autem ab A. Atilio Calatino erat Fides consecrata. Vides Virtutis templum, vides Honoris a M. Marcello renovatum quod multis ante annis erat bello Ligustico a Q. Maximo dedicatum. Quid Opis, quid*

In Book III, Cicero acknowledges material manifestations of these *Utilitates*, i.e. Virtues, even if he himself is not entirely convinced of their status as gods:

Therefore, do you suppose that a subtler argument is needed to refute such beliefs? For I consider *mens, fides, spes, virtus, honos, victoria, salus, concordia* and others of this nature to be a power, not gods themselves. For those [*utilitates*] such as *mens, spes, fides, virtus*, and *concordia*, are inherently present within ourselves, or there are those which we desire to possess, such as *honos, salus*, and *victoria*. I do see the utility of these qualities, and even see their dedicatory statues (*simulacra*), however, in what way would I understand or learn that this divine power is a god itself.⁶⁴

Even though Cicero's comments (which attempt to explain how the worship of these utility-gods came to be sanctioned by the Roman state) are laced with Stoic philosophical thought, Cicero, nevertheless, recognizes that there was a Roman community that generally accepted Roman virtues as gods, and that this community conceived of these virtues as bequests conferred upon man by that specific divinity itself, one which shares the same name. Varro clarifies this Roman conception of divine endowment:

Thus, it is Virtus who confers *virtus*, Honos who confers *honos*, Concordia who confers *concordia*, and Victoria who confers *victoria*.⁶⁵

Furthermore, in the 4th century CE, Augustine reflected on these "antiquated" Roman deified Virtues, referring to them as deities who were their own divine gifts. Even as a Christian, Augustine seemed to

Salutis, quid Concordiae Libertatis Victoriae, quarum omnium rerum quia vis erat tanta ut sine deo regi non posset, ipsa res deorum nomen obtinuit. Quo ex genere Cupidinis et Voluptatis et Lubentinae Veneris vocabula consecrata sunt, vitiosarum rerum neque naturalium (quamquam Velleius aliter existimat), sed tamen ea ipsa vitia natura vehementius saepe pulsan. Utilitatum igitur magnitudine constituti sunt ei di qui utilitates quasque gignebant, atque his quidem nominibus quae paulo ante dicta sunt quae vis sit in quoque declaratur deo

⁶⁴ Cic. Nat. Deo. 3.61: Num censes igitur subtiliore ratione opus esse ad haec refellenda? Nam mentem fidem spem virtutem honorem victoriam salute concordiam ceteraque eius modi rerum vim habere videmus, non deorum. Aut enim in nobismet insunt ipsis, ut mens ut spes ut fides ut virtus ut Concordia, aut optandae nobis sunt, ut honos ut salus ut victoria; quarum rerum utilitatem video, video etiam consecrata simulacra, quare autem in iis vis deorum insit tum intellegam cum cognovero.

⁶⁵ Varro, apud Aug. C.D. 4.24, fragment 189: Ita Virtus, quae dat virtutem, Honor, qui honorem, Concordia, quae concordiam, Victoria, quae dat victoriam.

understand that the [ancestral pagan] Romans believed in the supernatural forces of these virtues as gifts, which came from the gods of the same name (or a close derivative).⁶⁶

'By which reason the pagans defend worshipping divine gifts as gods themselves'

However, I wish to consider their arguments. Is it truly believable that our ancestors were foolish that they do not know that these things are divine gifts, not gods? But since they knew that such gifts were not granted to anyone unless granted by some god, those whose names they did not invent, the pagans called those gods by the names of their powers which they believed came from them, thereby manipulating some of the names of these gods, for example they named Bellona from *bellum* (war), not Bellum; Cunina from *cuna* (cradle), not Cuna; Segetia from *seges* (crop), not Seges; Pomona from *pomus* (fruit), not Pomus; and Bubona from *bos* (ox), not Bos. However, surely, some names are called by the same, for example, the goddess who gives *pecunia* (money) is called Pecunia, even though *pecunia* itself is not considered to be a goddess. Thus, Virtus is the goddess who gives *virtus*, and Honos, *honos*, Concordia, *concordia*, and Victoria, *victoria*. Thus, as they say, when Felicitas is called a goddess, the word "Felicitas" does not refer to the good fortune that is given, but rather to the deity (*numen*) that bestows that good fortune.⁶⁷

The testimonies given by Cicero, Varro, and Augustine on these gods of virtues illuminate the fact that even the Romans themselves faced difficulty in understanding the nature of these gods, especially since they found it necessary to explain to their audiences the rationale, in their own views, behind these divinities. There was no one way to understand them, and many interpretations on the function of these gods pervaded the historical accounts through the ages. There was not even a Roman consensus on what to name these divine forces, for there was no Latin word commensurate with the English word "virtue" that possessed the same semantic connotation as the English word implies today. Even though the English word "virtue" derives from the Latin word *virtus*, the semantics of the word have changed, even in antiquity. Attested as early as the 3rd century BCE, *virtus* meant "manliness," which was qualified by

⁶⁶ Fears 1981a, 832.

⁶⁷ Augustine *Civ. Dei*. 4.24: "*Qua ratione defendant pagani, quod inter deos coolant ipsa dona divina*"

Usque adeone, inquit, maiores nostros insipientes fuisse credendum est ut haec nescirent munera divina esse, non deos? Sed quoniam sciebant nemini talia nisi aliquot deo largiente concede, quorum deorum nomina non inveniebant, earum rerum nominibus appellabant deos quas ab eis sentiebant dari, aliqua vocabula inde flectentes, sicut a bello Bellonam nuncupaverunt, non Bellum; sicut a cunis Cuninam, non Cunam; sicut a segetibus Segetiam, non Segetem, sicut a pomis Pomonam, non Pomum; sicut a bubus Bubonam, non Bovem; aut certe nulla vocabuli declinatione sicut res ipsae nominantur, ut Pecunia dicta est dea, quae dat pecuniam, non omnino pecunia dea ipsa putata est; ita Virtus, quae dat virtutem, Honos, qui honorem, Concordia, quae concordiam, Victoria, quae dat victoriam. Ita, inquit, cum Felicitas dea dicitur, non ipsa quae datur, sed numen illud attenditur a quo Felicitas datur.

several military characteristics including, but not limited to: “valor,” “prowess,” “courage,” “bravery” in English, in German “Tapferkeit” and “militärische Tüchtigkeit,” and *fors* and *fortitudo* in Latin. However, by the 1st century BCE, *virtus* received a new meaning: “moral excellence,” akin to the Greek ἀρετή, as it was contextualized in Greek Stoic philosophy in the 4th and 3rd centuries BCE. This new definition did not, however, subvert the meaning of *virtus* as a militaristic quality, but rather made it possible for non-militarists, such as Cato the Younger or Cicero for example, to inherit the desirable quality that bestowed such honor, glory, and fame upon the possessor. Moreover, the Latin definition of *virtus* was again modified in the Late Antique period, having been used to translate the New Testament’s concept of ἀρετή (excellence), and δύναμις (power; ability) into Latin. This change led to its post-antique definition as both “goodness” and “excellence,” similar to the modern German concept *Tugend* (f.), in describing the best that someone or something can be. The modern English word “virtue” derives from this post-antique definition of *virtus*, rendering it an appropriate term for Roman deified concepts, admirable qualities, conditions, characteristics, and values, much like the German concept *Eigenschaft*, -en (f.). These divinities the Stoics called *pragmata*, Cicero called *utilitates*, Augustine called *dona divina*, and Richardson, Fears, Stafford, and I call “Virtues.”⁶⁸ Irrespective of the vicissitudes of semantics over the course of Roman history, divine Virtues comprised the same group of gods classified by several operative words that still represented the cultic significance of public worship of these gods for their gift, power, ability, utility, quality, characteristic, concept, or value which they conferred upon man.⁶⁹ Lastly, such virtues bestowed upon the Romans who claimed to have received them, provided the most apparent evidence supporting the belief in the existence of these qualitative deities, these divine Virtues, in Roman religion.⁷⁰

The earliest *testimonium* of a Roman Virtue obtaining cult worship is indicated by Livy, who recounts that Salus received a temple on the Quirinal Hill, vowed by Gaius Iunius Bubulcus Brutus in 306

⁶⁸ Richardson 1978, 243; Fears 1981a; Stafford 2000.

⁶⁹ Fears 1981a, 833.

⁷⁰ Fears 1981a, 837. Cf. note above.

BCE during the Second Samnite War, presumably for Salus' divine assistance in maintaining not only Brutus' well-being in battle, but also the general welfare of the state.⁷¹ Dea Salus, therefore, became a divine product of warfare and victory; and Brutus himself became the first plebeian to vow a temple to a divine Virtue – a historical precedent which doubtless influenced subsequent leaders of Rome, like Marcellus, in their decisions to vow temples to other Virtues as a result of war and victory.

The consecration of the Temple of Salus demonstrated new possibilities for Republican magistrates to achieve greater eminence while in office by founding public cults to Virtues in Rome, and financing them independently as a charitable benefit to the state. Moreover, introducing these new cults into Roman state religion would have further solidified the bond shared between the Romans and the plenitude of divine beings who were believed to be watching over them and their human deeds. The abundance of divine spaces in Rome would have visually and psychologically shaped the city into a locus seemingly favored by *divinitas*. During the Republic, Rome was becoming a nucleus of sacred spaces, perhaps even the new religious *omphalos* of the ancient world, both of the traditional gods and of new deified Virtues. Over the next 72 years, mostly concentrated around the First Punic War, at least seven more public cults of divine Virtues graced the landscape of the sacred city, all born out of warfare, namely of Fortuna, Fides, Spes, Ops, Libertas, Honos, and Virtus.⁷²

Rome's hegemony over the Italian Peninsula as a result of the Punic Wars was justified by the victories of Rome's generals, who publicized their political and military leadership through the construction of public temples dedicated to their own personal virtues. However, their martial opportunities to obtain glory in warfare may not have happened without their procurement of political

⁷¹ Livy 9.43: "In that same year, a temple to Salus was contracted by the censor Gaius Iunius Bubulcus, which he had vowed as consul during the Samnite War:" *eodem anno aedes Salutis a C. Iunio Bubulco censore locata est, quam consul bello Samnitium voverat*. Cf. also Pliny *NH* 35.19; Clark 2007, 50-1; Ziolkowski 1992, 22, 144-8. The founding of the Temple of Concordia mentioned by Plutarch (*Cam.* 42) and Ovid (*Fasti* 1.64104) as being vowed by L. Furius Camillus in 367 is dubious, since the practice of deifying Virtues did not begin until the end of the 4th century BCE, cf. Coarelli 2014, 67; Clark (2007, 55) deems the dedication as part of Camillus' "legendary phase as a product of Augustan ideology."

⁷² Clark 2007, 58-69, 283-4.

office, their *honos*. Therefore, it is predictable that a magisterial vow would have been made to Honos – the deified Virtue of political offices. Additionally, Honos had an established relationship with the Roman military, namely with the cavalry.⁷³ For being a member of the Roman cavalry was the most honorable form of service in the military.⁷⁴ Cicero reports that, in 233, Quintus Fabius Maximus [Verrucosus Cunctator], a member of the Roman *nobilitas*, dedicated the first temple of Honos in Rome during the Ligurian War.⁷⁵ Livy locates the Temple of Honos just outside of the Porta Capena: “for [the Temple of Honos and Virtus] can be seen just outside of the Porta Capena.”⁷⁶ Furthermore, the 4th-century CE Roman historian Aurelius Victor adds that the great-grandfather of Fabius Maximus, the censor Quintus Fabius Rull[ian]us, inaugurated the *transvectio equitum* – the annual military procession of the *equites* – which commenced at the Temple of Honos and concluded at the Capitolium, thereby associating the Roman cavalry with the *gens Fabii Maximi*, as well as with the deified Honos.⁷⁷

Conversely, an earlier source, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, claims that the *transvectio equitum* commenced at the Temple of Mars outside the Porta Capena on the Via Appia, and passed by the Temple of Castor and Pollux – the two legendary *equites* of the Roman military. Furthermore, the *transvectio*

⁷³ McDonnell 2006, 215-7; McCall 2012, 19.

⁷⁴ McCall 2012, 19.

⁷⁵ Cic. *Nat. Deo*. 2.61. Conversely, Cicero, in *De Leg.* (2.58), recalls that another temple of Honos was constructed at the Porta Collina, and some scholars believe that this temple predates Fabius Maximus’ temple; however, the dating of the temple is inscrutable, and Cicero does not infer a date: *nostis extra portam Collinam aedem Honoris; aram in eo loco fuisse memoriae proditum est; ad eam cum lamina esset inventa et in ea scriptum lamina, “Honoris,” ea causa fuit, cur aedes haec dedicaretur:* “we are familiar with the temple of Honos outside the Porta Collina; it has come forth from my memory that, in that location, there was an altar, and discovered near it was a plaque on which was written “to Honos,” and because of this, the temple was dedicated.” There are no other accounts of this temple anywhere else. However, an inscription discovered near the Porta Collina reads *M. (vel. A.) Bicoleio(s) V(ibi) l. Honore donom dedet mereto* (ILLRP 157=CIL VI 30913), which may have belonged to this shrine, has been dated to the 3rd century BCE, according to McDonnell (2006, 213-4), which suggests that there may have been two temples dedicated to Honos in the 3rd century; however, there is just not enough evidence on the temple of Honos at the Porta Collina to make any plausible conclusions about dating and associations. Lastly, another dedicatory inscription was discovered nearby, which mentions Virtus, (...) *m Virtute de ea sum(ma) rest[itum] quam... jius T(h)eseus Virtuti d(ono) [de(derat)]* (CIL VI 31061), suggesting a cultic association between Honos and Virtus at the Porta Collina. However, according to McDonnell (2006, 214, no. 30), the orthography of the letters on this inscription indicates that it should date to the 2nd century BCE. This, to me, suggests that this inscription may have been originally associated with Marcellus’ temple of Honos and Virtus at the Porta Capena before it was moved, since there is not cultic association between Honos and Virtus before Marcellus made his vow in 222 BCE. Richardson (1978, 244) conjectures that the dedication was originally made by Verrucosus’ great-grand father Q. Fabius Maximus Rullianus; however, Richardson’s suggestion is incorrect, cf. Clark (1991, 342-3).

⁷⁶ Livy 25.40: *visebantur enim ab externis ad portam Capenam dedicata a M. Marcello temple.*

⁷⁷ Aur. Vic. *de Viris Illustribus* 32.1-4.

equitum occurs on the 15th of July, just two days before the feast-day of Honos on July 17th, suggesting a calendrical connection between the two celebrations, which supports Aurelius Victor's account.⁷⁸ In any case, the processional route of the *transvectio equitum* passed through the Porta Capena – the location of the Temple of Honos – before it terminated on the Capitoline Hill. Ziolkowski, McDonnell, and McCall persuasively propose that Fabius Maximus dedicated the Temple of Honos at the Porta Capena in 233 on the site of the processional route of the *transvectio equitum* in order to occasion tribute to his great-grandfather Quintus Fabius Maximus Rullianus, a consul and censor, for his establishment of the cavalry's annual religious ceremony in 304.⁷⁹ Moreover, according to McDonnell, Fabius Maximus was also attempting to position his own military glory in the context of his great-grandfather's equestrian fame for establishing the Roman tradition of the *transvectio equitum*, into which it was a great honor for any cavalryman to be selected.⁸⁰

Thus, the Temple of Honos played an important role in the celebration of Fabius Maximus' forebear and celebrated his achievement of consulship for the first time. Fabius Maximus made the best of his one-year consulship in order to procure political glory and fame for posterity. In just this one year, he was elected consul of Rome, led the army to northern Italy, successfully defeated the Ligurians, and celebrated a triumph.⁸¹ The senatorial authorization of a triumph legitimized the *honos* Fabius Maximus acquired in 233, which he then celebrated by founding the cult and temple of Honos. The Temple of Honos, located in a highly-trafficked area in Rome, would have given the impression of the god's divine approval of Fabius Maximus' deeds, and, above all, of his exemplary rank on the *cursus honorum*. Furthermore, as is customary with all temples in Rome, a cult statue of Honos would have been erected in the cella, whose image was likely conceived by Fabius Maximus himself. Evidenced by numismatic and

⁷⁸ Dio. Hal. *Rom. Ant.* 6.13.4; Ziolkowski 1992, 292; McDonnell 2006, 216; McCall 2012, 20.

⁷⁹ Ziolkowski 1992, 58-60, 292-8; McDonnell 2006a, 80; 2006, 216; McCall 2012, 20.

⁸⁰ McDonnell 2006, 218-9.

⁸¹ Plut. *Fab Max.* 2.1.

sculptural representations beginning in the 1st century BCE, Honos was depicted as a young, semi-nude male, who carries a scepter or cornucopia.⁸² Subsequently, Fabius Maximus was appointed censor like his great-grandfather in 230, dictator in 221 and 217, consul four more times in 228, 215, 214, and 209, and augur for 62 years – all laudable public offices which would have been interpreted by the people of Rome to have been divinely endorsed by Fabius Maximus’ patron deity and divine Virtue: Deus Honos.⁸³

Honos was likely a provocative choice for any magistrate to venerate in the 3rd century – a time when deifying one’s own personal virtues became a normative practice in order to capitalize on having one’s political and/or military deeds sanctioned by the gods. This may help us better understand Marcellus’ resolution to vow a temple to Honos, who had already been welcomed into the syncretistic mechanisms of Roman state cult. When Marcellus made his vow to Honos and Virtus in 222, the cult of Honos was already a political-religious institution in Rome, thanks to Fabius Maximus.⁸⁴ The fact that Marcellus vowed to dedicate another cult to Honos in Rome was unprecedented and difficult to comprehend when considering that the cult of Honos was only recently founded.⁸⁵ Marcellus would have certainly been aware of the Temple of Honos at the Porta Capena and also of the fact that not only was Fabius Maximus still alive, but he was one of the most powerful members of the senate.⁸⁶ Because Livy’s account of the year 222 no longer survives, it is impossible to know whether or not Marcellus’ vow was publicly denounced by Maximus, since Marcellus may have subverted Maximus’ established claim to Honos and his divine connection to Maximus’ political network, which he crafted between his aristocratic pedigree and the Roman cavalry. Livy does, however, assert that Marcellus’ attempted dedication of his new dual temple in 208 was immediately obstructed by the pontiffs, lending credence to the presupposition that Fabius Maximus, an augur and pontifex himself, may have proactively stifled

⁸² Jones 1990, 139-4.

⁸³ Broughton 1951-2, 202, 224, 227-8; for his position as augur, cf. Plut. *Marc.* 1.2.

⁸⁴ McDonnell 2006, 215-6.

⁸⁵ Richardson (1978, 244) remarks that it is unusual and unthinkable for one to rebuild a temple belonging to another man while that man is still alive.

⁸⁶ McDonnell 2006, 217.

Marcellus' inaugural dedication, holding Marcellus in contempt.⁸⁷ Irrespective of the political-religious ramifications he may have faced in Rome, Marcellus, nevertheless, vowed to dedicate a temple to Honos and Virtus at the Battle of Clastidium.

The battle was a cavalry engagement first and foremost.⁸⁸ After leaving his co-consul Cornelius Scipio at Acerrae, Marcellus escorted 1,800-2,600 cavalymen to Clastidium, where he battled against Viridomarus' much larger combined force of 10,000 Gauls, who were renowned for the superior skills on horseback.⁸⁹ Plutarch even called Marcellus' victory the greatest cavalry victory in Roman history, because never before had such a small cavalry force defeated such a larger one; and Vergil even proclaimed that Marcellus saved the Roman state as an *eques* from the perils of the rebellious Gauls.⁹⁰ Thus, it is not difficult to recognize Marcellus' vow to Honos – a divine Virtue previously engaged to the Roman cavalry – as a symbolic declaration of the consular cavalry's valiance displayed in battle, as well as of his own personal honor inherited as their equestrian commander.

Marcellus' invocation of Honos during the Battle at Clastidium doubtless exemplified the honor of the Roman military. However, I believe that Marcellus' superior status as consul of Rome contributed to his decision to dedicate a cult to Honos, who was just as much an equestrian god as he was the patron deity of political offices – the magistracies of the *cursus honorum*. Marcellus had rapidly ascended the ranks of the *cursus honorum* as early as 228-225, when he was elected curule aedile – an honorable magistracy which propelled his career as a Roman politician. Simultaneously, Marcellus was inducted into the collegiate priesthood of the Roman state as an elected augur, indicative of the fact that he would have been trained in the *sacra* of Roman religion. And in 222, Marcellus, an ambitious political visionary not unlike Fabius Maximus, was elected consul for the first time. Having placed their good faith in him, the

⁸⁷ Livy 27.25.

⁸⁸ Polyb. 2.34; Plut. *Marc.* 6.6-7.

⁸⁹ Plut. *Marc.* 6.6. The size of the cavalry is calculated by McCall, cf. above, minus the 600 infantrymen.

⁹⁰ Plut. *Marc.* 6-7 and *Comp. Pelop. and Marc.* 1.2; Verg. *Aen.* 6.856-9.

senate trusted Marcellus' leadership, even though he had ascended the political platform only a few years before. In that same year, Marcellus and his chosen co-consul Cornelius Scipio were dispatched by the senate to Cisalpine Gaul with their consular armies in order to quell the Gallic insurrection, which would not have been possible without Marcellus' attainment of consulship – the hallmark of his political career at that point in time.

Thus, his vow to Honos, the god of magistracies, at the Battle of Clastidium can also be understood in the context of Roman politics. His pledged temple to Honos should be considered as an emblematic monument of his achievements, built within the framework of Roman religion and politics. Even though Marcellus' pledge to dedicate a temple to Honos may have disengaged Honos' political and religious associations with the *gens* Fabii Maximi, causing acrimony between him and Fabius Maximus, I do not believe that this was Marcellus' original intention, at least not in 222. The biographies of Polybius and Plutarch indicate that Marcellus' main objective was to scale the course of honors – an ambitious enterprise which reflected his desire for political fame – not to defile the name of a living political colleague of higher rank. This would get him nowhere in the socio-political circles of the senate. Because there was no law that inhibited a magistrate from dedicating a temple to a deified Virtue that had already received cult status in Rome, Marcellus likely did not consider his actions of vowing a temple to Honos to be transgressive. After all, it is possible that Marcellus never initially intended to reappropriate Fabius Maximus' Temple of Honos, for he may have envisioned constructing his own temple. However, for reasons unstipulated by our ancient biographers, and unbeknownst to us, a rededication of Fabius Maximus' temple was eventually chosen, but not until 208.

Political honor was not Marcellus' only earnest endeavor, however. He also desired military glory, not unlike many of his military predecessors, those mentioned above, whose military exploits doubtless served as a model for Marcellus. From an early age, Marcellus naturally developed an intuitive talent in

combat warfare, through which he cultivated his *virtus*.⁹¹ Marcellus' proclivity for battle tactics and stratagems established his reputation as a gifted warrior, steeped in *virtus*, which lasted the entire course of his lifetime. *Virtus* defined Marcellus, and served as his guiding light toward his lifetime achievements, as illuminated by his ancient biographers. Marcellus' inherent fearlessness and abilities in combat-warfare were displayed on 39 battlefields over the course of his lifetime, enumerated by Pliny. Ultimately, Plutarch remarks that no other Roman had ever won more victories than Marcellus, designating him the "Sword of Rome" – the captain of the Roman Republic in the theatre of war *par excellence*.⁹² Marcellus' burgeoning reputation in *virtus* reinforced the senate's decision to elect him as Roman consul in 222 – the year in which the Gauls invaded the Po Valley *en masse*. The Gallic invasion of the *patria* gravely endangered Rome's hegemony over the north. And since the Gauls continued to infiltrate the Italian landscape, Marcellus' aptitude in *virtus* became the crux for his election into his first consulship so as to lead the consular forces to Cisalpine Gaul in order to permanently eradicate the Gauls.

Furthermore, because Marcellus abandoned Cornelius Scipio at Acerrae in order to pursue the Gallic king, I believe that he harbored a deliberate motive to enter into a duel with Viridomarus in order to bolster his reputation in *virtus* in an attempt to eclipse his colleague in fame and glory during their joint consular year. Marcellus saw an opportunity to gain glory at Clastidium and took it. The Battle at Clastidium afforded him the opportunity to obtain Viridomarus' resplendent armor, the *spolia opima*, which, I believe, became a visual analogue to the *virtus* he acquired on the battlefield. Since the people of Rome could not witness Marcellus' martial bravery on the battlefield at Clastidium, he relayed his newly acquired *virtus* to the public through a visual medium. And because *virtus* had not yet taken physical form in Roman religion, I believe that he used the *spolia opima* as a provisional prototype of his *virtus* – a

⁹¹ Plut. *Marc.* 2.

⁹² Pliny *NH* 7.92; Plut. *Marc.* 9; *Fab. Max.* 19.

physical manifestation of his bravery, manhood, and, above all, his martial excellence.⁹³ That the spoils divested from Rome's enemies allegorically represented *virtus* is corroborated by Cicero, who asserts that *spolia* embodied the *gloria*, *virtus*, and *victoria* of a victorious commander.⁹⁴ And that *virtus* was considered a prize to be won in battle is also corroborated by Cicero, who declares that "piety for the Republic, (*pietas in rem publicam nostrum*), hard work (*labor*), attentiveness (*assiduitas*), a battle contest (*dimicatio*), and martial valor (*virtus*), all worthy of a great general, constitute his hope for these rewards (*praemiorum*) in return for the dangers he faces."⁹⁵ Indeed, the *spolia opima* would have been a provocative display of *virtus* as *praemia*, infused with the ideological significance of Roman superiority. And when paraded on military campaign or through the streets of Rome during triumph, the sight of the barbarian's own despoiled armor would have enhanced the *esprit de corps* of the Romans, instilling a sense of nationalistic pride. The *spolia opima* would have served as a temporary emblem of Marcellus' *virtus*, until he could actualize his vow to erect a temple in Rome to house a cult statue of the deified *virtus*.

When Marcellus returned to Rome with the *spolia opima*, the senate promptly granted him a triumph for defeating Rome's most formidable adversary and for saving Rome from barbarism. Marcellus' triumph was the senate's ultimate recognition of his military leadership, and the culmination of his military career, which would not have been possible without his *virtus*. According to Plutarch, no other celebratory performance could match Marcellus' triumphal procession, which was unparalleled in its pageantry of seemingly infinite displays of wealth, captives, and spoils.⁹⁶ His army followed closely behind,

⁹³ Similarly, the author of *de Bello Hispaniensi* explicitly states that the shields and weapons taken from the conquered enemies are insignia virtutis, or symbols of martial valor (32). See discussion on Caesar and this passage in Chapter II.

⁹⁴ Cicero (*Verr.* 2.74-8), while discussing the despoiled statue of Diana taken from Segesta by the Carthaginians, which was later restored by Scipio Africanus after he conquered Carthage, and, subsequently, despoiled again by Verres, asserts that, when Verres had the statue removed, he "also truly robbed Scipio Africanus, the strongest among men, of the glory of his accomplishments, of the memory of his *virtus*, and of the monument of his victory" (*verum etiam P. Africani, viri fortissimi, rerum gestarum gloriam, memoriam virtutis, monumenta victoriae C. Verrem sustulisse*).

⁹⁵ Cic. *Balb.* 17: *...pietas in rem publicam nostram, labor, assiduitas, dimicatio, virtus digna summo imperatore, spes pro periculis praemiorum*. For a further example of spoils considered *praeda* gained by *virtus* in battle, cf. *Caes. Alex.* 42.

⁹⁶ McCall (2006, 25), rejects Plutarch's credibility to call Marcellus' triumph 'seldom equaled in splendor and wealth and spoils and captives of gigantic size' because it is "a common tendency by later writers to over-aggrandize the victory celebrations of

Once Marcellus and his cortege reached the Capitoline Hill, he entered the Temple of Jupiter Feretrius and erected his trophy. Plutarch affirms that this is the third and final time any Roman had ever achieved the honor to dedicate the *spolia opima*, the first being Romulus and the second being Cornelius Cossus.⁹⁹ McCall, and especially Flower, in her extensive examination on the historical tradition of the *spolia opima*, have convincingly argued that the ancient accounts on Romulus' and Cossus' acquisitions of the *spolia opima* are illusory, myth-historical legends rather than factual, historical moments, and that Marcellus himself was most likely the inventor of the *spolia opima*, being the only secure example of a historical figure to have credibly won and dedicated the *spolia opima*.¹⁰⁰ And the historicity of Marcellus'

¹⁰⁰ McCall 2012, 24; Flower 2014, 286-302, 316-7. For the most relevant sources on Romulus, cf. Cic. *Rep.* 2.7.12-10.17; Livy 1.10; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.34.4; Plut. *Rom.* 16; Val. Max. 3.2.3; Flor. 1.1.11; Serv. *Aen.* 6.859. And for Cossus, cf. Livy 4.19-20; Prop. 4.10; Dion Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 12.5; Fest. 204L; Val. Max. 3.2.4; Manil. *Ast.* 1.788; Front. *Strat.* 2.8.9; Plut. *Rom.* 16; *Marc.* 8; Serv. *Aen.* 6.841 and 855. in Flower 2014, 255-6, nos. 2 and 4.

acquisition of the *spolia opima* is corroborated by the *Fasti Triumphales*, which was reestablished by Augustus in 19 BCE. Marcellus' exploitation of the booty of foreign adversaries became a tradition, in which waging war was no longer just a necessity, but also a commodity in order to capitalize on the martial glory and fame which the spoils produced in Rome. From the moment when Marcellus repudiated the armistice proposed by the Gauls, Roman warfare, which had been largely defensive since the advent of the Republic, had now become seductive. War was thenceforth an open platform upon which subsequent generals of the Republic could demonstrate their *virtus* in battle, and, consequently, reap the benefits of barbarian subjugation, namely honor, glory, and eternal fame – the desirable products of *honor* and *virtus*.

I.III. Hannibal and the Threat of Foreign Virtus

The paucity of literary sources on Marcellus' life after 222 is lamentable; however, Marcellus' name temporarily resurfaces in Livy, who reports that, in 216, Lucius Postumius Albinus was elected praetor of Gaul, and Marcellus praetor of Sicily.¹⁰¹ According to Livy, Marcellus' praetorship also put him in command of the Roman navy, which was deployed to Africa so that the Romans could engage with the Carthaginians in battle on their own soil.¹⁰² Livy's account signifies that Marcellus had no interest in idling in Rome as a politician, even in his ripe age, and that Marcellus, an exceptional tactician in maneuvering between war and politics, still pursued *virtus* in battle. That a triumph over the one seemingly indestructible barbarian, Hannibal Barca, would result in the most celebrated and memorable victory of the history of the Republic was absolutely clear. And Marcellus may have been seduced by the idea of vanquishing Rome's most-wanted terrorist. If Marcellus could capture Hannibal, he knew that his name would forever live in the collective memory of the Roman people as *conservator* of the Roman Republic.

In that same year, shortly after Marcellus was sent to Ostia to command the naval fleet, Hannibal led a company of approximately 40,000 Carthaginian forces, including Numidian and Spanish soldiers, as

¹⁰¹ What Marcellus was doing between his triumph for the Gallic Wars and his election to praetorship remains unknown; however, McCall (2012, 34) posits that Marcellus was away on official senatorial business since his election was *in absentia*.

¹⁰² Livy 2.34

well as the addition of Gallic mercenaries into Italy.¹⁰³ They marched the length of the Italian Peninsula until they arrived at Cannae, in southeast Italy, where the Romans who were governing the area around neighboring Canusium stored their foodstuffs and supplies. The stronghold at Cannae was immediately besieged by the Carthaginians, leaving the Roman army in distress.¹⁰⁴ According to Polybius, the senate ordered the consuls of that year, Lucius Aemilius Paullus and Gaius Terrentius Varro, to orchestrate a war at Cannae.¹⁰⁵ There, the largest army the Romans had ever assembled was decimated by the Carthaginians at the Battle of Cannae. According to Livy, 50,000 Romans were mercilessly slaughtered on the battlefield, including the two quaestors, 29 military tribunes, several ex-consuls, ex-praetors, ex-aediles, and 80 other former magistrates who had volunteered their lives to defend the *patria* from Carthaginian barbarism. Moreover, 3,000 infantrymen and 1,500 cavalrymen were taken prisoner by Hannibal, amounting to the largest military defeat Rome had ever suffered.¹⁰⁶ The Carthaginians expunged the *virtus* of the Romans; and their capital now lay in the line of fire, vulnerable and exposed to the looming threat of destruction.

When the people of Rome received the petrifying news about the defeat at Cannae, religious vows, sacrifices, and supplications pervaded every house and temple in Rome.¹⁰⁷ In the wake of the massacre at Cannae, the senate decided to dispatch emissaries to both Fabius Maximus and Marcellus, “who were similarly admired for their unparalleled characteristics.”¹⁰⁸ As Plutarch recalls, “Poseidonius said that Fabius was called ‘the shield’ and that Marcellus was ‘the sword’”, and that together, “the combination of Fabius’ steadfastness synthesized with Marcellus’ security assured salvation for the Romans.”¹⁰⁹ “For the latter [Marcellus], just as it had been stated in the former written accounts of his life, exulted in brilliant actions as a man with a strike-ready hand, and was, from birth, like those men

¹⁰³ McCall 2012, 34.

¹⁰⁴ Polyb. 3.107.

¹⁰⁵ Polyb. 3.17; the numbers have been calculated by McCall (2012, 35).

¹⁰⁶ Livy 22.49, 22.59-60; McCall 2012, 36.

¹⁰⁷ Polyb. 3.112.

¹⁰⁸ Plut. *Fab. Max.* 19: ἀπὸ τῆς ἐναντίας σχεδὸν προαιρέσεως θαυμαζόμενοι παραπλησίως.

¹⁰⁹ Plut. *Marc.* 9: ὁ δὲ Ποσειδώνιος φησι τὸν μὲν Φάβιον θυρεὸν καλεῖσθαι, τὸν δὲ Μάρκελλον ξίφος... κίρναμένην δὲ τὴν Φαβίου βεβαιότητα καὶ ἀσφάλειαν τῇ Μαρκέλλου συνηθείᾳ σωτήριον γενέσθαι τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις.

whom Homer called a ‘battle-lover’ and ‘high-spirited,’” according to Plutarch.¹¹⁰ Marcellus was asked to leave Ostia and report to Canusium to relieve the current consul of his duties and take command of the remaining Roman army as soon as possible, demonstrating the senate’s confidence in Marcellus’ military capabilities. After relinquishing 1,500 soldiers from his naval fleet at Ostia to help defend Rome, and after confiding the rest of the fleet to his companion Publius Furius Philus, Marcellus marched to Canusium.¹¹¹

Around the same time, Hannibal, after relishing in his victory at Cannae, delivered a speech to the Roman prisoners, in which he proclaimed that “his forefathers had yielded to the *virtus* of Rome, and that he himself was striving to make the Romans yield to his own good fortune and to his own *virtus*.”¹¹² Just as Marcellus had sought martial glory and renown through his military victories, so, too, did Hannibal, according to Livy, effectively valorizing the enemy in order to render him Rome’s most formidable opponent. Even though this passage is provided to us by a later Roman source, we can still glean from Livy’s account that, from this time forward, martial valor, *virtus*, was a desirable virtue pursued by all military commanders, both Roman and foreign, both civilized and barbarous, all who prioritized *virtus* in order to solicit honor, glory, and respect.

Hannibal and the Carthaginians left Apulia and headed northwest toward Rome, entering the territory of Samnium and, eventually, into Campania, intending to conquer the principal town of Capua.¹¹³ The Capuans produced a treaty of alliance with Hannibal with the stipulation that Campania would be an autonomous country governed by its own laws after the wars in Italy were concluded.¹¹⁴ After obtaining partnership with Capua, Hannibal shifted his focus toward Nola, a wealthy and resourceful Campanian town, which, if besieged, may have benefited Hannibal in demoralizing the rest Campania and preventing

¹¹⁰ Plut. *Fab. Max.* 19: ὁ μὲν γάρ, ὥσπερ ἐν τοῖς περὶ αὐτοῦ γεγραμμένοις εἴρηται, περιλαμπές τὸ δραστήριον ἔχων καὶ γαῦρον, ἅτε δὴ καὶ κατὰ χεῖρα πλήκτης ἀνὴρ καὶ φύσει τοιοῦτος ὢν οἴους Ὅμηρος μάλιστα καλεῖ ‘φιλοπτολέμους’ καὶ ‘ἀγερώχους’.

¹¹¹ Livy 22.57; Plut. *Marc.* 9.

¹¹² Livy 22.58: *et patres virtuti Romanae cessisse, et se id adniti, ut suae in vicem simul felicitati et virtuti cedatur.*

¹¹³ Livy 23.1.

¹¹⁴ Livy. 23.7-11.

the possibility of an internal rebellion created by Roman sympathizers.¹¹⁵ Nola was well fortified, which may have contributed to the local senate's decision to maintain their allegiance with Rome, even though the citizens wished to collude with the Carthaginians.¹¹⁶ The senate of Nola immediately sent emissaries to Marcellus, who was, at the time, encamped at the Campanian town of Casilinum during his expedition to Canusium. The envoys informed him that Nola was occupied by Hannibal and the Carthaginians, who were on the verge of taking the town by force with the help of treason.¹¹⁷

Honoring their request for assistance, Marcellus turned his army toward Nola. When the Romans approached the city, the Carthaginians escaped to Neapolis to secure a coastal harbor town in which Carthaginian ships arriving from Africa could anchor.¹¹⁸ Discovering that Neapolis was already occupied by the Romans, commanded by the prefect Marcus Junius Silvanus, Hannibal turned his attention back to Nola, sacking and burning the town of Nuceria along the way before establishing a camp outside of Nola.¹¹⁹ Marcellus, knowing that Hannibal was within striking distance, devised a surprise attack. He withdrew behind the walls of Nola, and ordered his Roman legions to begin forming their battle lines in front of the walls, shielding Nola's three city gates. On Marcellus' mark, the gates of Nola were unbolted, the trumpets roared, and the Roman infantry erupted onto the battlefield *en masse*, immediately engaging with the Carthaginians. Concurrently, Marcellus' lieutenants, Publius Valerius Flaccus and Gaius Aurelius, mobilized the auxiliary forces from the flanks and enveloped the enemy, overwhelming the Carthaginians from all sides.¹²⁰ Suffocated by the deluge of Romans and demoralized by the ensuing chaos of Marcellus' blitzkrieg, the remaining Carthaginians who weren't immediately slain, evacuated the battlefield and retreated to their camps. The Romans reclaimed their martial dignity, their *virtus*, lost at Cannae. According to Livy, 2,800 Carthaginians were slaughtered by the Romans, whereas Plutarch estimates no

¹¹⁵ Livy 23.14, 23.45; Plut. *Marc.* 10.

¹¹⁶ Livy 23.14.

¹¹⁷ Livy 23.14.

¹¹⁸ Livy 23.14.

¹¹⁹ Livy 23.14.

¹²⁰ Livy 23.14; Plut. *Marc.* 11.

more than 5,000.¹²¹ Livy compares Hannibal's defeat at Nola to the Battle at Cannae, concluding that Marcellus' victory was just as devastating to the Carthaginians as it was for the Romans who were defeated at Cannae. In fact, Livy states that Hannibal's martial *virtus* (*virtus bellica*) had been expunged by Marcellus and his army at Nola, demonstrative of the fact that *virtus* could be lost in battle: "It was there that his martial *virtus* had been extinguished (*extinctam*), as well as the discipline of his soldiers, their previous reputation, and their hope for the future."¹²² During the Battle at Nola, Marcellus not only defeated Hannibal, but also his *virtus*, bringing great renown (κλέος) to him and courage (θάρσος) to the Romans, according to Plutarch.¹²³

Similarly, during the Battle of the Caudine Forks in 321, Livy recounts that the Samnites had decimated the Roman army, forced the survivors under the yoke, and, effectively, exterminated Roman *virtus* during this military disaster: "The Samnites had won not only a famous but an eternal victory; for they had captured (*cepisse*), not Rome herself, just as the Gauls did in the past, but something much more martial in character, the *virtus* and *ferocia* of the Romans (*Romanam virtutem ferociamque*)."¹²⁴ Livy's use of *cepisse* makes it transparent that *virtus*, or martial valor, is something that could be captured during war, like a martial prize – a uniquely conceptualized social construct of the Romans. We can infer from Livy that he also believed that *virtus* was at stake in warfare – a sort of ideological *spolium* that was considered to belong to the victors as a token of their superior martial aptitude.

Even though he was not capable of capturing or killing Hannibal, Marcellus was able to thwart him in battle, paralyzing Hannibal's unrelenting momentum and trammeling his army's *esprit de corps*. In

¹²¹ Livy 23.14; Plut. Marc. 11.

¹²² Livy 23.45: *ibi virtutem bellicam, ibi militarem disciplinam, ibi praeteriti temporis famam, ibi spem futuri extinctam*. Livy uses the location 'Capua' instead of 'Nola' only because Hannibal and the Carthaginians were stationed at Capua from where they embarked to Nola and encountered Marcellus in battle; nevertheless, Livy is still referring to Hannibal's defeat at Nola; cf. Livy 23.44-6. *Virtus* is attributed to Hannibal no fewer than five times in Livy, cf. Sarsila 2006, 192. For another example of *virtus extinctam*, cf. Cic. Phil. 5.47, in which Cicero states that *virtus* was often lost before it could be a service to the state. However, this type of *virtus* does not seem to be martial, but rather political, unlike the use of *virtus* in Livy, cf. Sarsila 2006, 184.

¹²³ Livy 23.14; Plut. Marc. 11: κλέος δὲ μέγα Μαρκέλλῳ καὶ Ῥωμαίοις ἐκ κακῶν θάρσος.

¹²⁴ Livy 9.6: *habere Samnites victoriam non praeclaram solum sed etiam perpetuam, cepisse enim eos non Romam, sicut ante Gallos, sed, quod multo bellicosius fuerit, Romanam virtutem ferociamque*. Cf. also Tac. Ann. 24.

effect, Marcellus was the only Roman commander to have ever won a tactical victory over Hannibal; and this is attested by both Valerius Maximus and Livy, who reports that: “it was an achievement that [Marcellus], after the greatest challenges, was the first to gain the glory of battle from his enemy [Hannibal], not being the reverse, and adding to his own renown, Marcellus was the last Roman commander to fall at the greatest moment of his success in war.”¹²⁵ Marcellus’ military strategy at Nola is a testament to his *virtus* – his inherent force that bravely navigated his martial judgments and propelled him towards glory, towards κλέος, recognized by Plutarch, and *gloria*, by Livy, both of which vicariously reflected on the integrity of the people and on the collective courage of Rome. His successful deflection of Hannibal’s overall offensive on Italian soil contributed to his celebrity and respectability among her people. The Romans swelled with pride at Marcellus’ victory over Hannibal, confirmed by Cicero, whose raised spirits during a personal matter he compared to those of the Roman people as they first learned of his victory in the Battle at Nola.¹²⁶

The senators of Rome, however, did not perceive Marcellus in the same light. They paradoxically decided to retire him from battle with no explanation, and ordered the remainder of his army to sail to Sicily and remain there until the end of the domestic wars in Italy.¹²⁷ The senate’s indignant proposition, likely tendered by Marcellus’ detractors who perceived Marcellus’ lionization as a threat to their own reputations, challenged the current sentiments of the Roman people.¹²⁸ The people championed Marcellus as an unparalleled military commander for his successful performances on the battlefield, and also for the sense of security his victories consequently brought them. Fortunately for Marcellus, the popular assembly subverted the senate’s decision and “ordered that *imperium* be given to Marcellus as proconsul, since he alone of the Roman commanders had achieved success in Italy after the disaster at

¹²⁵ Val. Max. 4.1.8; Livy 26.29: *facta est, ut ex quo primus post adversissimas haud adversae pugnae gloriam ceperat, in eius laudem postremus Romanorum imperatorum, prosperis tum maxime bellicis rebus, caderet.*

¹²⁶ Cic. *Brut.* 12; McCall 2012, 41.

¹²⁷ Livy 23.25.

¹²⁸ Marcellus’ most formidable rival was Fabius Maximus, who was just as ambitious as Marcellus in seeking political and military fame and glory.

Cannae.”¹²⁹ Just as the senate registered their faith in both Marcellus and his *virtus* in 222 BCE during the Gallic War, now, too, have the people of Rome, whose confidence in Marcellus as their principal military commander and political leader during this time of crisis is transparent. From this moment on, Marcellus held *imperium* until his death in 208.

Once again, Marcellus’ *honor* was predicated on his *virtus*. His martial aptitude once again qualified him for the honorable position of consulship for the second time in 215.¹³⁰ However, immediately after he was elected consul, a thunderclap reverberated across the skies of Rome; and as a Roman augur trained in the auspices of religious rites, he construed this to be an inauspicious omen, and resolved to abdicate his magistracy at once, according to Plutarch.¹³¹ Or, according to Livy, the other augurs of Rome interpreted that the fulminating omen was unfavorable, and that the gods did not approve of an election of two plebeian co-consuls for the first time, rather than the customary consular tradition of electing one from each *ordo*.¹³² Perhaps by no coincidence, another augur of Rome, Fabius Maximus, a patrician and the original consecrator of the Temple of Honor, replaced Marcellus as consul for his third time in 215. Fabius Maximus likely held contempt for Marcellus, who may have incidentally obfuscated Fabius Maximus’ familial, political, and religious affiliations to Honor by having pledged his own vow to construct his own sanctuary in Rome for Honor.¹³³

At the end of the year, the current consul Fabius Maximus held elections in Rome, resulting in the appointment of Marcus Aemilius Regillus and Marcellus’ half-brother Titus Otacilius Crassus as consuls for the year 214 BCE, delegated by the centuries of the Aniensis tribe, much to the chagrin of Fabius

¹²⁹ Livy 23.30: *M. Marcello pro consule imperium esse populus iussit, quod post Cannensem cladem unus Romanorum imperatorum in Italia prospere rem gessisset.*

¹³⁰ Livy 23.31; Plut. *Marc.* 11.

¹³¹ Plut. *Marc.* 12.

¹³² Livy 23.31.

¹³³ Livy 23.31; McCall 2012, 51. Bereft of his title as consul of Rome, Marcellus returned to Nola and garrisoned there through the year 215, quelling several more attempted incursions by Hannibal and the Carthaginians from time to time during the so-called Second Battle at Nola, according to Livy (23.44-8). Livy states that more than 5,000 Carthaginians were slain, including two elephants, and 600 more were taken hostage in the second Battle at Nola of 215 BCE. He also reports that fewer than 1,000 Romans perished. Livy’s passage, however, is replete with doubt, and most historians believe that he mistakenly duplicated the first Battle at Nola in 216 BCE, cf. McCall 2012, 52.

Maximus.¹³⁴ Fabius Maximus urged the tribe to vote again, since he considered Otacilius Crassus unworthy of the consulship. Otacilius Crassus interpreted Fabius Maximus' defamatory rhetoric to mean that Fabius Maximus wanted to extend his own consulship by another year. Heated discourse ensued, and the centuries of the Aniensis tribe voted again, this time delegating Fabius Maximus and Marcellus as co-consuls of Rome for the year 214. The rest of the centuries voted for the same two men without exception, regardless of their political rivalry.¹³⁵ Thus, Marcellus, albeit *in absentia*, was elected consul of Rome for the third time while he was still encamped with his legions at Nola in Campania, once again testifying to the people's trust in Marcellus' governance. Furthermore, the people both confided in Marcellus' *virtus* and his ability to stymie the advances of Rome's most formidable adversaries, Hannibal and his harrowing Carthaginians; and they also relied on his leadership as consul of Rome, his *honos*. No greater honor could have befallen Marcellus, whose authority both on the senate floor and on the battlefield, was endorsed by the people of Rome – a man graced by the gifts of *honos* and *virtus*.

I.IV. The Siege of Syracuse and the Renewal of Marcellus' Vow to Honos and Virtus

In 214, after Marcellus had returned to Nola from the Battle at Casilinum against Hannibal, a rebellion erupted in Syracuse between pro-Roman and pro-Carthaginian factions, after their young king, Hieronymus, son of Hiero II, was assassinated.¹³⁶ Hieronymus and Hannibal had brokered a treaty, which stipulated that, in return for helping the Syracusans expel the Romans from Sicily, the island would be split in half between Syracuse and the Carthaginians.¹³⁷ Subsequently, Hieronymus was murdered by pro-Roman conspirators, and the city was propelled into anarchy. After a few attempted coups to overthrow the Syracusan government, the current magistrates, Epicydes and Hippocrates, former sycophants of Hannibal, sent emissaries to Appius Claudius, Marcellus' legate, in order to renew their alliance with the

¹³⁴ Livy 24.7-9.

¹³⁵ Livy 24.9.

¹³⁶ Livy 24.21; Plut. *Marc.* 13.13; Polyb. 7.2.

¹³⁷ Poly. 7.4.

Romans, shifting their loyalty, likely because they feared that Hannibal would subjugate Syracuse regardless of their former pact.¹³⁸ Once the news that Hannibal might gain hegemony over Sicily was heard, the senate entrusted Sicily to Marcellus as his own province in order to reaffirm Sicily's allegiance to Rome, confiding in his political and martial experience.¹³⁹

Marcellus sailed to Sicily and seized command over the Roman forces led by his legate, Appius Claudius.¹⁴⁰ Concurrently, ambassadors from Syracuse arrived to announce terms of peace, which Marcellus endorsed. Unfortunately, the Syracusans reneged on peace because Epicydes and Hippocrates successfully convinced the Syracusans that the Romans would ruthlessly decimate Syracuse, even though the Romans were trying to free them from the bond of Carthage. Blinded by the light of liberty, the Syracusans elected Epicydes and Hippocrates as generals of the Syracusan army and collectively renounced their allegiance with Rome. Marcellus, after receiving a report on what transpired at Syracuse, deployed ambassadors to negotiate peace with the Syracusans one last time; however, to no avail. The Romans were turned away at the gates, which initiated the Siege of Syracuse.¹⁴¹

Syracuse, a large, powerful, and well-fortified Greek city-state, exerted cultural influence over Magna Graecia, and, to a lesser extent, over Rome; and Marcellus had reservations on attacking Syracuse since, at the time, it was recognized as the nexus of the Mediterranean basin, establishing business, trade, and cultural relations with cities around the ancient world. Even though the Syracusans excelled in scientific theory, engineering, arithmetic, and great works of art, they publicly declared that they were not Roman, thereby demonstrating their subversion of Roman law and values. Therefore, the Romans perceived them as a threat to Roman sovereignty and an inferior people. They were barbarians, the designation of which must have contributed to Marcellus' decision to besiege Syracuse.¹⁴² This must have

¹³⁸ Livy 24.27.

¹³⁹ Livy 24.21.

¹⁴⁰ Plut. *Marc.* 13.13.

¹⁴¹ Livy 24.29-33, 26.31; Plut. *Marc.* 14; Polyb. 8.3; McCall 2012, 60.

¹⁴² Cf. Plut. *Marc.* 14-7 for the admiration of Syracusan ingenuity, especially in regards to Archimedes.

been a difficult decision for him, however, a necessary one, since the credibility of Rome's supremacy in military power, law, and justice was at stake, challenged by Syracuse's repudiation of their allegiance to Rome under the scrutiny of the public. The world was watching, and Marcellus, an observer of justice, according to Plutarch, had no choice but to respond to Syracuse's condemnation of Rome lest the Romans appear weakened, bereft of *virtus*, especially with the Second Punic War against Hannibal still looming in the background.¹⁴³ Marcellus saw Syracuse's resistance as an opportunity to make a public example of Syracuse, lending opportunity to exercise his superiority in *virtus*, and, vicariously, the *virtus* of Rome.

What made Marcellus' decision to besiege Syracuse even more challenging was the fact that Marcellus was a Hellenophile – an appreciator of Greek art, religion, culture; and, according to Plutarch, a lover of Greek education and tradition (*Ελληνικῆς παιδείας καὶ λόγων... ἐραστής*).¹⁴⁴ Marcellus first made contact with the Greeks in his youth, on his first military campaigns in Sicily during the First Punic War.¹⁴⁵ We hear from Plutarch that Marcellus was garrisoned in Syracuse for some time, where he rescued his half-brother from the perils of the Carthaginians. Syracuse was ruled, at the time, by King Hiero II, whose court must have made a lasting impression on Marcellus. For he, after his victory at the Battle at Clastidium, sent many splendid gifts to Hiero II, a friend and ally, who decorated the city's temple of Olympian Zeus with Marcellus' Gallic spoils, according to Plutarch and Livy. Marcellus also had a golden bowl sent to the Pythian Apollo at Delphi as a votive offering, testifying not only to Marcellus' faith in the Greek gods, but also to his knowledge, respect, and zeal for Greek customs.¹⁴⁶ However onerous and lamentable it may have been for Marcellus to assault a city, its people, and its culture, all of which he greatly admired, he nevertheless recognized his responsibility to uphold justice among Rome's foreign and barbarous subordinates – a duty of his *honor* as elected consul and provincial praetor of Sicily.

¹⁴³ Plut. *Marc.* 20.

¹⁴⁴ Plut. *Marc.* 1.

¹⁴⁵ On Marcellus' philhellenism, cf. Gros 1969, 85-114.

¹⁴⁶ Plut. *Marc.* 8; Livy 24.21; 25.29; McDonnell, 2006a 83-4.

Furthermore, the prospect of annexing an entire foreign land and expanding Rome's control abroad would have bolstered his *curriculum vitae*, thereby outshining his rival Fabius Maximus not only in *honos*, but also in *virtus* – the pillars of Roman supremacy.

Sometime in 212, we are told by Livy, “the siege at Syracuse finally came to an end, made possible not only by internal treason, but also by the might and the *virtus* of the commander [Marcellus] and his army.”¹⁴⁷ Moreover, Cicero adduces that “it was the greatest and most famous general, Marcus [Claudius] Marcellus, by whose *virtus* Syracuse was captured, and by whose compassion it was saved.”¹⁴⁸ These are the earliest sources in which two ancient Roman authors, Livy and Cicero, attributed *virtus* directly to Marcellus, indicating that the city of Syracuse could not have been stormed without the martial valor, the *virtus*, of Rome's most valiant commander, Marcellus.¹⁴⁹

However, Marcellus seems to have been conflicted about sacking the city he loved so much. According to Livy: “When Marcellus infiltrated the fortifications and, from the highest parts of the city, looked upon that most beautiful city at that time lying before his eyes, he wept, partly for the joy of this great accomplishment, but partly also for this ancient city's own glory.”¹⁵⁰ And, similarly, Plutarch recounts that:

“When he glanced down and viewed the great and beautiful city from above, he is said to have wept, lamenting the city's doomed fate, keeping in mind that its form and appearance would soon greatly change after his army plunders it. For there was no one among his officers who could bear the courage to oppose the demands of the soldiers to acquire booty, and many of them urged that the city should be scorched and razed to the ground. This, however, Marcellus strongly vetoed; however, feeling an involuntary compulsion from his soldiers, he allowed the spoils of property and slaves, although he forbade his men to touch the free citizens, and sternly ordered them neither to kill nor

¹⁴⁷ Livy 25.23: *Syracusarum oppugnatio ad finem venit, praeterquam vi ac virtute ducis exercitusque, intestina etiam prodicione adiuta.*

¹⁴⁸ Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.84: *Itaque ille vir clarissimus summusque imperator, M. Marcellus, cuius virtute captae, misericordia conservatae sunt Syracusae.* Cic. Repeats this at *Orat.* 2, 2.4.

¹⁴⁹ It is important to note that Livy also ascribed *virtus* to Marcellus' army, implying that all men who serve in the military learned *virtus* through training and possessed the ability to attain *virtus*, especially those whose *vis* contributed to victory in warfare (and we will see this again in the future when Caesar confers *virtus* upon his soldiers for their strength in battle). However, what sets Marcellus apart from his soldiers is his *honos* – his superior rank in the *cursus honorum* as consul of Rome three times, governing praetor of Sicily and commander of his own legions.

¹⁵⁰ Livy 25.24: *Marcellus ut moenia ingressus ex superioribus locis urbem omnium ferme illa tempestate pulcherrimam subiectam oculis vidit, inlacrimasse dicitur partim gaudio tantae perpetratae rei, partim vetusta gloria Urbis.*

enslave any of the Syracusan citizens. However, although he appears to have acted with great moderation, he thought that the city suffered a terrible fate, and while his comrades greatly rejoiced, his spirit waned with sympathy and pity when he saw a radiant and glorious city of good fortune deteriorate before his eyes. For it is said that no smaller amount of wealth was carried away from Syracuse than from Carthage at a later time. Not long afterwards, the rest of the city was besieged and subjected to plunder, save the treasure of the king, which was converted into the treasury of the people. But what afflicted Marcellus most of all was the death of Archimedes.”¹⁵¹

These passages on Marcellus’ bereavement over the destruction of Syracuse and the death of Archimedes illuminate Marcellus’ fondness for the city’s beauty and compassion for its community, with which he became acquainted while garrisoned in Syracuse during the First Punic War, living under the patronage of Hiero II.¹⁵² While residing in Syracuse, Marcellus was exposed to the splendor of its great Greek works of art that once blanketed the city both within and without the court of the king, lending credence to the fact that he held considerable regard and appreciation for Greek culture. And after the siege, Marcellus transferred Greek statues and paintings both to the sanctuary of the Cabeiri at Samothrace and also to the temple of Athena at Lindos, not only affirming his reverence for Greek religion and praxis, but also saving Greek works of art he considered important.¹⁵³ Moreover, McDonnell argues

¹⁵¹ Plut. *Marc.* 19: αὐτὸς μέντοι λέγεται κατιδὼν ἄνωθεν καὶ περισκεψάμενος τῆς πόλεως τὸ μέγεθος καὶ τὸ κάλλος ἐπὶ πολὺ δακρῦσαι τῷ μέλλοντι γίνεσθαι συμπαθήσας, ἐννόησας οἷον ἐξ οἴου σχῆμα καὶ μορφήν ἀμείψει μετὰ μικρὸν ὑπὸ τοῦ στρατοπέδου διαφορηθεῖσα. τῶν γὰρ ἡγεμόνων οὐδεὶς μὲν ἦν ὁ τολμῶν ἐναντιοῦσθαι τοῖς στρατιώταις αἰτουμένοις δι’ ἀρπαγῆς ὠφελῆσθαι, πολλοὶ δὲ καὶ πυρπολεῖν καὶ κατασκάπτειν ἐκέλευον. ἀλλὰ τοῦτον μὲν οὐδὲ ὅλως προσήκατο τὸν λόγον ὁ Μάρκελλος, μάλα δὲ ἄκων βιασθεὶς ἔδωκεν ἀπὸ χρημάτων καὶ ἀνδραπόδων ὠφελεῖσθαι, τῶν δὲ ἐλευθέρων σωματῶν ἀπέπεινε ἄψασθαι, καὶ διεκελεύσατο μήτε ἀποκτεῖναι τινα μήτε αἰσχῦναι μήτε ἀνδραποδίσασθαι Συρακουσίων. Οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καίπερ οὕτω μετριάσαι δόξας οἰκτρὰ πάσχειν ἡγεῖτο τὴν πόλιν, καὶ τὸ συμπαθεῖν καὶ τὸ συναλοῦν ὅμως ἐν τοσοῦτῳ μεγέθει χαρᾶς ἢ ψυχῇ διέφαινε ὁρῶντος ἐν βραχεῖ χρόνῳ πολλῆς καὶ λαμπρᾶς ἀφανισμὸν εὐδαιμονίας. λέγεται γὰρ οὐκ ἐλάττωνα τοῦτον ἢ τὸν ὕστερον ἀπὸ Καρχηδόνος διαφορηθέντα πλοῦτον γενέσθαι· καὶ γὰρ τὴν ἄλλην πόλιν οὐ μετὰ πολὺν χρόνον ἀλοῦσαν ἐκ προδοσίας ἐβιάσαντο διαρπάσαι, πλὴν τῶν βασιλικῶν χρημάτων· ταῦτα δὲ εἰς τὸ δημόσιον ἐξηρέθη. Μάλιστα δὲ τὸ Ἀρχιμήδους πάθος ἡνίασε Μάρκελλον.

¹⁵² *Contra* McCall (2012 72), who believes that these stories were a fabrication, and that Marcellus had no particular sentiments toward Syracuse, which is erroneous since Syracuse had been a great part of his formative years, in which he was able to become familiar with Hiero II and his royal court. On Marcellus’ philhellenism, cf. Gros 1979, 85-114.

¹⁵³ Plut. *Marc.* 30. This is the earliest evidence for Roman interest in the sanctuary at Samothrace, cf. Cole 1984, 87. Cole alleges that Marcellus’ dedications at Samothrace and at Lindos were more political than religious; however, they are, of course, both, since politics and religion were interwoven, especially during times of war. Moreover, she has neglected to acknowledge the fact that Marcellus was a Roman augur and greatly involved in religious rites. Cole also believes that his dedications were a symbolic warning to the Greeks, cautioning the Greeks in the east of Rome’s potential power. However, there are no indications that Marcellus ever desired to expand Rome’s power that far east, not this early in time. I am more inclined to believe that Marcellus was showing off, rather than trying to intimidate the Greeks, especially since he was himself “Hellenocentric.” One idea that I do agree with, however, is that there must be some significance for Marcellus to dedicate votives at these specific religious sanctuaries.

that Marcellus' votive dedications of Greek art, as well as his triumphal displays of art, drew on a victory model of Hellenistic rulers from the east; and that Marcellus' Hellenistic influence must be located within the Hellenistic milieu of the Syracusan court of Hiero II, further corroborating that Marcellus became aware of and admired Hellenistic cultural traditions while living in Syracuse.¹⁵⁴ And, indeed, Livy's statement above seems to imply that Marcellus was forced to walk a fine line between retaining the cultural integrity of Syracuse – a city and a community which he passionately admired – and achieving military victory, honor, and *virtus* for himself and for the greater glory of Rome. Even though Marcellus bemoaned the sack of Syracuse, he was, nevertheless, imbued with pride and pleasure over his seemingly impossible military achievement. Marcellus may have concluded that the benefits of victory outweigh the cost of grief, i.e. the prospect of eternal glory seems to have eclipsed Marcellus' ephemeral moments of emotion. After all, he was a Roman, a magistrate, and a commander of the Rome's military, whereas the pro-Carthaginian Syracusans were the rebels, the barbarians, whom he was obliged to defeat, despite his reverence for their religion, art, and ingenuity. Marcellus may have realized that Syracuse would be forever remembered for its glory whether or not he had any measurable effect on the city. Conversely, because he did dramatically alter Syracuse's course in history, he must have also recognized that he, too, would be forever remembered for his own *honos* and *virtus* earned by defeating Rome's defiant enemies of the time – the Hannibalic sympathizers of Syracuse.

At the end of the summer of 211, Marcellus returned to Rome, unaccompanied by his consular army, which was ordered to remain in Sicily, as ordered by the senate account of the Punic Wars still continued in Sicily. At a session with the senate in the Temple of Bellona, Marcellus respectfully demanded a triumph. However, his reasonable request was rejected by the senate on a technicality, namely that, even though Marcellus completed his mission in Sicily, he did not return to Rome with his army, despite the fact that the senate forbade his army to evacuate the province while the Carthaginians were still

¹⁵⁴ McDonnell 2006a, 83; 2006, 231. For Hellenistic triumphs, cf. Erskine 2013.

menacing in western Sicily. After deliberating for some time, the senate adopted a compromise tailored to their own interests, granting the conqueror of Syracuse an *ovatio* – a minor triumph – which must have afflicted Marcellus’ ego and pride.¹⁵⁵ Plutarch, reading between the lines of Livy’s account, construed that the senate arbitrarily denied Marcellus’ request for a triumph due to their political jealousy, which manifested from the prospect of conferring yet another triumph upon Marcellus. The conception of granting Marcellus’ request instigated acrimony in the senate, most probably because the senate believed that Marcellus was becoming too powerful in *honos* and *virtus* – in political and martial glory, thereby eclipsing their own merits.¹⁵⁶ Hostility may have burgeoned between Marcellus and Fabius Maximus, especially since Marcellus renewed his vow to dedicate a temple to both Honos, Fabius Maximus’ patron deity, and to Virtus, symbolically outshining Fabius Maximus in military excellence.¹⁵⁷ The senate was determined to devalue the reputation of Marcellus, lest he outshine every senator in Rome, each vying for the same goals of self-interest: political power and military glory, *honos* and *virtus*.

Marcellus, nevertheless, swallowed his pride and was receptive to an *ovatio*.¹⁵⁸ Before the *ovatio* was to take place, the tribunes of the plebs, on the authority of the senate, implored the people to allow

¹⁵⁵ Livy 26.21; Plut. *Marc.* 22; Plut. *Cras.* 11. On the “minor triumph,” cf. Plin. *NH* 15.19; Dion. Hal. 8.67.10. For an extensive discussion on the *ovatio*, cf. G. Rohde. 1942. *Ovatio*. *RE* XVIII.2, cols. 1898-9. Cf. also Bonfante Warren 1970, 51; Versnel 1970, 166-8; Weinstock 1971, 326-331.

¹⁵⁶ Plut. *Marc.* 22.

¹⁵⁷ Envy amongst the senators is corroborated by the fact that the senate arbitrarily awarded Fabius Maximus a triumph in 209 for besieging Tarentum even though he did not end the war in southern Italy, cf. Plut. *Fab. Max.* 23.

¹⁵⁸ The first *ovatio* was celebrated by P. Postumius Tubertus in 503, cf. Dion. Hal. 5.47, Pliny *NH* 15.38 and *Fast Triumphalis* yr. 503 BCE (Degrassi, *Fast Capitolini*, 1954). Livy (26.21) uses the formulaic expression *ut ovans urbem iniret* (“so that he may enter the city rejoicing”) *ovans* being the pres. act. pple. of the verb *ovo*, *-are*: to rejoice. He also uses the same literary formula at 39.29. Augustus, in *RGDA* 4.1, uses a similar formula: *bis...ovans triumphi et tri. curulis triumphos*; “I celebrated an *ovatio* twice and triumphed in a chariot three times.” Plutarch expounds on the meaning and significance of a Roman *ovatio*, describing it as a procession in which the victorious general does not mount himself upon the four-horsed chariot, nor do the trumpets roar for him, but rather he marches through the city on foot, accompanied by the lighter sounds of flutes, and wears a wreath of myrtle upon his head, rather than the triumphal laurels. In this way, as suggested by Plutarch, the commander’s appearance is unwarlike and more pleasant, rather than intimidating: Plut. *Marc.* 22. However, the *ovatio* was later celebrated on horseback, e.g. Dio (54.8) recounts that, during Augustus’ *ovatio*, he rode on horseback. Plutarch also mentions that the term *ovatio* derives from the Greek word *εὐαν* and *ὄβαν* (*ova*; sheep) used by the Romans, because the customary sacrifice for the *ovatio* was a sheep, whereas it is customary to sacrifice an ox during a triumph. The earliest attestation of *ovatio* appears to be given by Dionysius of Halicarnassus in *Rom. Ant.* 5.47, in which he explains that a “lesser triumph” is called an *οὐαστήν*, a transliteration of the Roman word *ovatio*, an unintelligible perversion, according to him, of the appropriate Greek term *εὐαστής* (*euastês*). He elaborates that the tradition was first established by Licinius Macer. He also recounts that the victorious general enters the city by foot, accompanied by his army, and not mounted in a chariot, but that he is dressed in a white toga embroidered with purple as it is the customary dress of consuls and praetors. Moreover, he states that the general celebrating an *ovatio* does

Marcellus to enter Rome during his *ovatio* with *imperium*, or with full authority, which was eventually granted.¹⁵⁹ The significance of conferring the right for Marcellus to enter Rome with *imperium* demonstrates that the tribunes and the people of Rome dissented from the senators and their attempt to diminish Marcellus' military accomplishments, which the people of Rome acknowledged as nothing short of glorious for both Marcellus and for all of Rome. Nevertheless, Marcellus took advantage of this slight and resurrected an ancient tradition by conducting his own triumph on the Alban Mount, on which the senate could not intervene, as the Alban Mount was outside of the jurisdiction of Rome.¹⁶⁰ It is transparent that Marcellus conceived of this idea not only to badger his senatorial colleagues, but also to vindicate his *virtus*, which he earned at Syracuse. The supremacy of Rome was traditionally displayed through triumph, publicizing the accomplishments of the military and might under the leadership of their victorious commander – their *triumphator*. And Marcellus would have it no other way. Thus, since the senate repudiated Marcellus' much-deserved official title of *triumphator*, Marcellus took it upon himself to hold a Roman triumph outside of Rome to uphold his *virtus*, the *virtus* of his soldiers, and, by proxy, the *virtus* of Rome. And on the day before Marcellus' scheduled *ovatio*, he triumphed on the Alban Mount.¹⁶¹

On the next day, returning from the Alban Mount, Marcellus entered Rome with *imperium*, decreed by the people, to celebrate his *ovatio*. Polybius, Plutarch, and Livy illuminate the opulence and splendor of Marcellus' pageantry while also perpetuating the historical reproach and criticisms Marcellus'

not hold a scepter as he normally would during a triumph. Pliny (*NH* 15.38) uses a similar expression to Livy's and Augustus': *ovans ingressus urbem est* ("he entered the city rejoicing) and adds that the tradition of wearing myrtle for an *ovatio* derives from P. Postumius Tubertus' *ovatio* in 503 BCE, in which he wore a crown of myrtle of Venus Victrix. Lastly, Gellius (*Noct. Att.* 5.6) uses the term *ovalis*, *ovantes* and *ovandi* – part of speech of the verb *ovo*, *-are*, similar to Livy's usage – in order to explain an *ovatio*. He also adds that the general's crown was made of myrtle. However, more importantly, he states the reason an *ovatio* is granted, namely that the war was declared illegitimate, or that the adversary was considered unworthy, as in the case with pirates or slaves, or that the victory was considered a diplomatic victory in which there was a quick surrender and no blood was spilled.

¹⁵⁹ Livy 26.21.

¹⁶⁰ Livy 26.21; cf. also 33.23, in which Livy states that Minucius triumphed on the Alban Mount after the senate similarly rejected his proposal to hold a triumph in Rome; Plut. *Marc.* 22. The first attested triumph on the Alban Mount occurred in 231, introduced by the consul C. Papirius Maso as a deliberate act of protest against the senate which denied him a triumph, cf. Pittenger 2008, 43-4; Warren Bonfante 1970; Versnel 1970, 165-6; T.C. Brennan. 1996. *Triumphus in Monte Albano*, in R.W. Wallis & E.W. Harris. *Transitions to Empire: Essays in Greco-Roman History, 360-146 B.C., in Honor of E. Badian*, Oklahoma Series in Classical Culture 21. Oklahoma University Press, pp. 315-337, esp. 320.

¹⁶¹ Livy (42.21) later describes triumphs on the Alban Mount as customary, allowing the celebration of a triumph without the authorization of the senate.

name incurred during the late Republic for propagating a dangerous and destructive adulation for Greek art, which, according to the opinions of the historians, rendered subsequent Romans avaricious, envious, and unprincipled in the indiscriminate pillaging of Greek works of art, both secular and sacred.¹⁶² Many of these works of art were subsequently housed in Marcellus' Temple of Honos and Virtus:

In regards to the decoration of the city, the statues and paintings in which Syracuse abounded, [Marcellus] removed to Rome, since they were the spoils of the enemy and acquired by the right of war. Thus, the beginning of the adulation of Greek works of art began, as well as the license for all kinds of buildings, sacred and secular to be despoiled, a license which finally turned against Roman gods, and that very temple which was extraordinarily adorned by Marcellus. For the temples [of Honos and Virtus] dedicated by Marcellus at the Porta Capena used to be visited by foreigners on account of their superior adornments of the type.¹⁶³

¹⁶² Polyb. 9.10: "A city is not adorned with foreign works but rather with the moral excellence of its inhabitants..."

Then the Romans resolved to haul all these objects back to their own country, leaving nothing behind. If they had the right to do so, and if it were in their own interest or not are matters to be weighed, but the more convincing arguments purport that their deeds were wrong and are still considered wrong today. For if they relied on such actions in the past for the development of their country, they clearly would have had reason to carry back to their country the kind of things that contributed to their expansion. But if, while leading a life of simplicity, far away from all such excessive opulence, they were frequently victorious over those foreigners who had a great number and beautiful examples of such works of art, then should it not be considered that the Romans made a mistake? ...Thereafter, the Romans used the spoils that came from private homes to adorn their own homes, and those that were public, they used to adorn their public buildings: "Οὐκ ἐκ τῶν ἔξω κοσμεῖται πόλις, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῆς τῶν οἰκούντων ἀρετῆς... Ἐκρίθη μὲν οὖν διὰ τοῦτο τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις τὰ προειρημένα μετακομίζειν εἰς τὴν ἑαυτῶν πατρίδα καὶ μηδὲν ἀπολιπεῖν· πότερα δ' ὀρθῶς τοῦτο καὶ συμφερόντων αὐτοῖς ἔπραξαν ἢ τάναντία, πολὺς ἂν εἴη λόγος, πλείων γε μὴν εἰς τὸ μὴ δεόντως σφίσι πεπραχθῆαι μὴ δ' ἀκμήν νῦν πράττεσθαι τοῦτο τοῦργον. εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἐκ τοιούτων ὀρμηθέντες προεβίβασαν τὴν πατρίδα, δῆλον ὡς εἰκότως ταῦτα μετέφερον εἰς τὴν οἰκείαν, δι' ἧν ἠυζήθησαν. εἰ δ' ἀπλουστάτοις χρώμενοι βίοις καὶ πορρωτάτῳ τῆς ἐν τούτοις περιττότητος καὶ πολυτελείας ἀφαστῶτες ὁμῶς ἐπεκράτουν τούτων αἰεὶ παρ' οἷς ὑπῆρχε πλεῖστα καὶ κάλλιστα τὰ τοιαῦτα, πῶς οὐ νομιστέον εἶναι τὸ γινόμενον ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἀμάρτημα; ...Ῥωμαῖοι δὲ μετακομίσαντες τὰ προειρημένα ταῖς μὲν ἰδιωτικαῖς κατασκευαῖς τοὺς αὐτῶν ἐκόσμησαν βίους, ταῖς δὲ δημοσίαις τὰ κοινὰ τῆς πόλεως. Plut. Marc. 21: "When the Romans called Marcellus back to the war in his native country, returning to Rome, he brought back a greater part and the most beautiful dedicatory offerings from Syracuse so that they would be visual representations of his victory in the triumphal procession, and adornments for Rome. For before this time, Rome neither had nor knew about such opulent and extraordinary commodities, nor did the Romans have an appreciation for such refined and graceful objects, but rather had foreign arms and bloody spoils, and was crowned with monuments and triumphal trophies, and the sight was neither enjoyable nor sanguine for the delicate and cowardly spectators... Thus, Marcellus won more favor with the common people for beautifying the city with objects of Greek grace and character...." Τὸν δὲ Μάρκελλον ἀνακαλουμένων τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἐπὶ τὸν ἐγγώριον καὶ σύνοικον πόλεμον, ἐπανερχόμενος τὰ πλεῖστα καὶ κάλλιστα τῶν ἐν Συρακούσαις ἐκίνησεν ἀναθημάτων, ὡς αὐτῷ τε πρὸς τὸν θρίαμβον ὄψις εἴη καὶ τῇ πόλει κόσμος. οὐδὲν γὰρ εἶχεν οὐδ' ἐγίνωσκε πρότερον τῶν κομψῶν καὶ περιττῶν, οὐδὲ ἦν ἐν αὐτῇ τὸ χάριεν τοῦτο καὶ γλαφυρὸν ἀγαπώμενον, ὅπλων δὲ βαρβαρικῶν καὶ λαφύρων ἐνάμιον ἀνάπλεως οὔσα καὶ περιστεφανωμένη θριάμβων ὑπομνήμασι καὶ τροπαίοις οὐχ ἰλαρὸν οὐδ' ἄφοβον οὐδὲ δειλῶν ἦν θέαμα καὶ τρυφῶντων θεατῶν... διὸ καὶ μᾶλλον εὐδοκίμησε παρὰ μὲν τῷ δήμῳ Μάρκελλος ἡδονὴν ἐχούσας καὶ χάριν Ἑλληνικὴν καὶ πιθανότητα διαποικίλας ὄψεσι τὴν πόλιν... Livy 26.21: Then, as he entered the city celebrating his *ovatio*, a pageantry of booty paraded before him. There was a statue of 'Captured Syracuse,' there were catapults, ballistae, and all other machines of war, and decorations of a long-lasting peace and royal opulence, some furniture, a force of skillfully-made gold and silver objects, superior fabrics and respected statues with which Syracuse had been embellished among the principal cities of Greece. And also, as a symbol of victory over the Carthaginians, there were eight elephants:" *Inde ovans multam prae se praedam in urbem intulit. Cum simulacro captarum Syracusarum catapultae ballistaeque et alia omnia instrumenta belli lata et pacis diuturnae regiaeque opulentiae ornamenta, argenti aerisque fabrefacti vis, alia supellex pretiosaque vestis et multa nobilia signa, quibus inter primas Graeciae urbes Syracusae ornatae fuerant. Punicae quoque victoriae signum octo ducti elephantum.*

¹⁶³ ...ornamenta urbis, signa tabulasque quibus abundabant Syracusae, Romam devexit, hostium quidem illa spolia et parta belli iure; ceterum inde primum initium mirandi Graecarum artium opera licentiaeque huius sacra profanaque omnia vulgo spoliandi

Moreover, according to Plutarch, , Marcellus commissioned an original portrait statue of himself to be dedicated in the temple of Athena Lindia.¹⁶⁴ This is the second instance in which Marcellus devised an original work of art to symbolize his victory over the Syracusans, the first being the personification (*simulacrum*) of “Captured Syracuse,” which Marcellus had commissioned for his celebratory parade during his *ovatio* in Rome. The *simulacrum* of Captured Syracuse articulates Marcellus’ knowledge of, and fondness for allegorical representations, just as he invented the *spolia opima* as a visual analogue to his acquired *virtus* during the Battle of Clastidium.¹⁶⁵ Plutarch, quoting Poseidonius – a friend of the *gens* Claudii Marcelli, who lived in Rhodes for many years in the late-second and early-first centuries BCE – preserves the epigram inscribed on Marcellus’ Lindian portrait: “Oh stranger, this is the Mighty Star of Rome, [Marcus] Claudius Marcellus of an illustrious pedigree, who held the power of consulship seven times and shielded his country during times of warfare from the enemies whom he annihilated.”¹⁶⁶ His commissioned portrait statue and its epigram exemplifies Marcellus’ desire to lay before the Greek goddess of civics and war his greatest achievements: his *honos*, by which he held Roman consular and proconsular power seven times, and his *virtus*, without which his glorious military accomplishments – the *spolia opima*, the Gallic triumph, the defeat of Hannibal at Nola, the Siege of Syracuse, the triumph on the Alban Mount, and his *ovatio* in Rome – would not have been possible. His dedication of his portrait statue to Athena Lindia must have occurred in 208, the year in which he held his fifth and last regular consulship,

factum est, quae postremo in Romanos deos, templum id ipsum primum quod a Marcello eximie ornatum est, vertit. Visebantur enim ab externis ad portam Capenam dedicata a M. Marcello templa propter excellentia eius generis ornamenta.

¹⁶⁴ Unfortunately, no archaeological evidence survives to support Poseidonius’ account on the epigram; however, since he was a close friend of the Marcelli family and an inhabitant of Rhodes, his account, recapitulated by Plutarch holds merit. When exactly the statue was dedicated to Athena Lindia is unknown; however, it must have occurred in 208 BCE, the year in which Marcellus was consul for the fifth and final time, the year in which he attempted to dedicate his temple to Honos and Virtus in Rome and the year in which he died.

¹⁶⁵ Plut. *Marc.* 30; Livy 26.21.

¹⁶⁶ Plut. *Marc.* 30: Οὗτός τοι Ῥώμης ὁ μέγας, ξένε, πατρίδος ἀστήρ, Μάρκελλος κλεινῶν Κλαύδιος ἐκ πατέρων, ἐπτάκι τὰν ὑπάταν ἀρχὰν ἐν Ἀργεῖ φυλάξας, τὸν πολὺν ἀντιπάλους ὃς κατέχευε φόνον. Marcellus held five consulships and two pro-consulships.

and also the year in which he laid before the senate and the people of Rome his greatest achievements by locating his temple of Honos and Virtus at the gates of Rome.

14 years earlier, Marcellus vowed to dedicate a temple to Honos and Virtus for both achieving consulship for the first time – his *honos* – as well as for his victory over the Gauls, guided by his courage and martial valor in warfare – his *virtus*. However, Livy, Plutarch, and Valerius Maximus state that Marcellus' dedication of the Temple of Honos and Virtus was obstructed by the pontiffs of Rome; yet this incident did not occur until 208, indicating that it took 14 years to complete his temple-project before officially dedicating it in Rome.¹⁶⁷ Why Marcellus waited 14 years to dedicate his temple is perplexing, but not inscrutable. That Marcellus had the initial finances to embark on temple construction is substantiated by the splendid spoils he amassed after the Gallic War.¹⁶⁸ Thus, finances were not culpable. There is good reason to suspect that internal jealousy among the senators, especially between Marcellus and his political rival Fabius Maximus – an augur and pontifex himself, and the original creator of the cult of Honos in Rome – was the culprit. Accordingly, it is probable that a concerted senatorial and pontifical effort succeeded in sabotaging Marcellus' temple intentions; however, the historians make it clear that the official pontifical obstruction did not occur until Marcellus was prepared to open the temple in 208.¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, that Marcellus was not present in Rome long enough to undertake his temple project is also possible, considering that he was on campaign during the Punic Wars and did not return to Rome until after the Siege of Syracuse, ca. 211. Whatever the reason for this moratorium, Marcellus renewed his vow to Honos and Virtus during the Siege of Syracuse. Cicero asserts that "Marcellus vowed to dedicate two temples in Rome if he should capture Syracuse, one to Honos and one to Virtus."¹⁷⁰ We can deduce from

¹⁶⁷ Livy 27.25; Plut. *Marc* 28; Val. Max. 1.1.8.

¹⁶⁸ For spoils, cf. Plut. *Marc*. 8; Livy 24.21; 25.29. Gruen (1992, 100) suggests that Marcellus did not have the funds to finance his temple; however, there is no evidence to prove that Marcellus did not have the funds, but rather there is literary evidence for the contrary.

¹⁶⁹ For the ensuing rivalry between Marcellus and Fabius Maximus, cf. McDonnell 2006a, 72-85 and 2006, 206-240. A possible obstruction conceived by Fabius Maximus was first proposed by Ettore Pais. 1920. *Fasti Triumphales*. Rome, pp. 118-9.

¹⁷⁰ Cic. *Verr*. 2.121: *Et Marcellus qui, si Syracusas cepisset, duo templa se Romae dedicaturum voverat...Honori...Virtuti*; cf. also Val. Max. 1.1.8 for Marcellus' desire to consecrate his temple at both Clastidium and Syracuse. Cf. also Clark (1991, 341-6), who

Cicero's statement that Marcellus' second vow to Honos and Virtus was a *supplicatio* vow, in which the suppliant brokers a preemptive religious pact with the gods to exchange services – a traditional Roman *do-ut-des* religious contract. This suggests that Marcellus summoned divine assistance for his martial cause, exchanging the gods' gifts of *honos* and *virtus* for cultic rites in Rome if he should successfully besiege Syracuse. Moreover, because Marcellus failed to dedicate his promised temple to Honos and Virtus before the Siege of Syracuse, it is also logical to assume that he would have renewed his vow to his personal deities lest it be believed that they begrudgingly denied him another victory in war for not holding up his end of the agreement. A renewal of his vow would have extended his contract, in which Honos and Virtus would receive cultic rites in Rome for both Clastidium and Syracuse.

I.V. The Temple of Honos and Virtus at the Porta Capena

Unfortunately, no archaeological remains of Marcellus' temple of Honos and Virtus survive; however, Livy and Augustus locate the temple just outside the Porta Capena (*ad Portam Capenam*).¹⁷¹ As for the construction of the temple, Plutarch claims that Marcellus' temple of Honos and Virtus was built by the spoils of Syracuse, illustrating both that the abundance of Syracusan spoils dissolved any possible fiscal afflictions he may have encountered, and also that the temple was a manubial temple, financed *de manubiis*.¹⁷² Furthermore, while expounding on the types of acquisitions taken from Syracuse, Livy mentions that some of the spoils were placed inside the temple of Honos and Virtus.¹⁷³ However, Marcellus' temple project could not have yet been underway; therefore, the spoils which he desired to place in his temple, must have been temporarily housed elsewhere until 208 – the year in which the

conjectures that only the initial vow at Clastidium was made; however, there is no reason to argue against a second vow at Syracuse, especially since the original vow had not yet been fulfilled, and since Marcellus used the spolia from Syracuse to finance the Temple of Honos and Virtus.

¹⁷¹ Livy 25.40 (*ad Portam Capenam*), Aug. RG 11; cf. also Livy 26.32 (*in vestibulo urbis*). *Contra* Richardson (1978, 244), who believes that the temple was not located outside the gate because Livy did not use the term *extra*, but rather *ad*. However, Ziolkowsky (1992, 58-9) correctly locates the temple outside the gate because the phrase *ad portam* is used to signify other temples known to be located outside the gates, e.g. the shrine of Camenae and the Tomb of the Scipios *ad Portam Capenam*, and the temple of Venus Erycina *ad Collinam*.

¹⁷² Plut. *Marc.* 28.

¹⁷³ Livy 25.40.

project was believed by Marcellus to be finished.¹⁷⁴ Accordingly, his project took him three to four years to complete before his attempted dedication.

Cicero, ruminating on the pragmatic powers of divine Virtues in *de Natura Deorum*, states that one can visit “the temple of Virtus, and that of Honos, restored by Marcellus, which, many years ago, was dedicated by Fabius Maximus during the Ligurian War.”¹⁷⁵ Thus, Fabius Maximus dedicated his temple to Honos in 233 and Marcellus restored it sometime around 208, generating a 25-year gap between Fabius Maximus’ original dedication and Marcellus’ attempted rededication of the Temple of Honos. The perplexing question remains as to why Marcellus resolved to restore Fabius Maximus’ 25-year-old temple over the alternative of constructing a new temple of his own accord with which to venerate his patron deities elsewhere in Rome. There are several rational possibilities. First, that the original Temple of Honos, standing for two and a half decades, may have been falling into disrepair cannot be completely ruled out; and Marcellus may have seized the opportunity to invest in temple renovations to uphold the god’s honor. However, in 208, Fabius Maximus was still alive and, therefore, still capable of independently funding temple maintenance and care from the wealth of spoils he looted during his siege at Tarentum in 209. Second, the location of the temple at the Porta Capena could have been significant for Marcellus. In Book 26, Livy ponders what Hiero II would think if he were to see his city’s spoils displayed in the vestibule of Rome near the Porta Capena.¹⁷⁶ Livy’s reflection illustrates that the Porta Capena marked one of the city’s principal entrances, which granted access into Rome from the south along the Via Appia. Marcellus may have desired to position his temple here in order to remind all passers-by, both inhabitants and travelers, of his *honos* and *virtus*. The Temple of Honos and Virtus may have stood as a visual expression of political and martial propaganda, promulgating the message that Marcellus, who held consulship five times,

¹⁷⁴ Perhaps they were housed in the temple of Mars *ad Portam Capenam*, in which Marcellus’ dedicated a votive to the god, attested by an extant inscription, see below.

¹⁷⁵ Cic. *Nat. Deo.* 2.61: *Vides Virtutis templum, vides Honoris a M. Marcello renovatum quod multis ante annis erat bello Ligustico a Q. Maximo dedicatum.*

¹⁷⁶ Livy 26.32.

shielded Rome from her enemies by virtue of his civic honor and military valor. And the preexisting Temple of Honos granted him that possibility.¹⁷⁷

Finally, even though Fabius Maximus founded the cult of Honos in Rome and centered his political and military network around Honos, Marcellus also appointed Honos as one of his two tutelary deities in order to revere the god who granted political honors. The fact that Marcellus vowed a temple to Honos in 222 must have engendered resentment from Fabius Maximus, initiating a rivalry that proliferated thereafter.¹⁷⁸ That Fabius Maximus, as augur and pontifex, deliberately hampered Marcellus' temple-project from the time of the Battle at Clastidium in 222 to the time of the Siege of Syracuse in 212 is plausible. Furthermore, when Marcellus was elected consul for the second time in 215, the skies quaked with thunder and the Roman augurs, Fabius Maximus included, declared that Marcellus' consular election was deemed by the gods to be defective.¹⁷⁹ Marcellus had no choice but to abdicate and Fabius Maximus took his place – a political maneuver with which to defeat Marcellus. Therefore, it is not inconceivable that Marcellus attempted to dislodge Fabius Maximus' political, religious, and military connections to Honos in 208 by annexing and renovating his Temple of Honos for Marcellus' own political ambitions. By appropriating Fabius Maximus' Temple of Honos, Marcellus seized Fabius Maximus' *honos* for himself quite literally. He not only symbolically recovered his *honos* appropriated by Fabius Maximus in 215, but also literally, as he was elected consul of Rome by the people for the year 208, thereby achieving the same number of consulships as Fabius Maximus, five, likely holding the prospect of one day besting him in the number of consulships held. Fabius Maximus' political ploy eventually backfired, and Marcellus, the most

¹⁷⁷ Furthermore, the Temple of Mars was also located just outside the Porta Capena: Dio. *Hal. Rom. Ant.* 6.13.4. That Mars' martial disposition also appealed to Marcellus is corroborated by an extant inscription discovered on the Via Appia in the vicinity of the temple's location, which records that Marcellus himself made a dedication to the god of war: "The consul Marcus [Claudius] Marcellus, son of Marcus dedicates this to Mars." Inscription: *ILLRP* 218 = *CIL* 1.531 = *CIL* 6.474 = *ILS* 13: *Martei M. Claudius M. f. consul dedit*; McDonnell 2006, 217, no. 42.

¹⁷⁸ Marcellus and Fabius Maximus are juxtaposed by Plutarch in *Marc.* 9, and pitted against each other in *Marc.* 21, where Plutarch infers that the people of Rome seem to either support one or the other.

¹⁷⁹ Livy 23.31.

popular man in Rome, augur, and consul of 208, remained unopposed to restore the Temple of Honos *ad Portam Capenam*, where he envisioned his new sanctuary for Honos and Virtus.¹⁸⁰

Sometime between the Siege of Syracuse in 212 and 208, Marcellus finally realized his vow. Financed by the spoils of Syracuse, the Temple of Honos, a single-cella temple, was restored (*renovatum*) by Marcellus in order to house not only Honos, but also Virtus, to whom Marcellus undoubtedly attributed his integral bravery, martial valor, and overall Roman manliness – his *virtus*.¹⁸¹ Without his innate *virtus*, Marcellus never may have participated in so many duels, campaigned in the First Punic War, rescued his half-brother from the perils at Syracuse, become curule aedile, praetor, and consul, defeated Viridomarus in hand-to-hand combat, acquired the *spolia opima*, defeated the barbarian Gauls and their Celtic and German allies, triumphed in Rome, routed Hannibal at Nola, governed Sicily, besieged Syracuse, triumphed on the Alban Mount, celebrated an *ovatio* in Rome and last, but certainly not least, held *imperium* as commander of the Roman armies for nine consecutive years from 216 to 208.¹⁸²

Even though Marcellus was seemingly born with the congenital martial quality of *virtus*, he most likely did not consider this to be the case, since *virtus* needed to be earned and maintained through battle with the divine support of Virtus, as he believed. It seems to me that Marcellus had been competing for *virtus* his entire life, through contests in *virtus* for honor, glory, and fame.¹⁸³ Livy remarks on a contest in *virtus*, or *certamen virtutis*, in his historical anecdote about the modesty of Verginia, who dedicated an

¹⁸⁰ On winning the consulship for the year 208 BCE, cf. Livy 27.21.

¹⁸¹ Cic. *Nat. Deo*. 2.61.

¹⁸² For *imperium* cf. McCall (2012, 133-4), who also remarks that Marcellus held *imperium* one more year than Fabius Maximus. Upon his death, Marcellus outperformed Fabius Maximus in both *honos* and *virtus*, which was likely a deliberate political move, since they were political, religious and military rivals.

¹⁸³ Even though Livy is the first to introduce the Roman concept of a contest in *virtus* (*certamen virtutis*) (10.23), and is reiterated by Tacitus (*certamen virtutis* in *Ann.* 15.16), this idea is first applied to Caesar by McDonnell, who was influenced by Caesar's own accounts of gaining and losing *virtus* in battle in *de Bello Gallico*, cf. McDonnell, 2006, 161, 303. However, Rawlings (1998, esp. 179) nominally touches on the idea of appropriating *virtus* from the defeated enemy in *de Bello Gallico*. McDonnell only applies this idea to Caesar during his Gallic Wars; and, even though McDonnell's idea is duly applicable to Caesar, I believe that the idea of "contests in *virtus*" originally derived from Marcellus' contests in *virtus* beginning with his duels in hand-to-hand combat as a youth, which McDonnell does not touch upon. For Caesar and contests in *virtus*, cf. Chapter Two. Moreover, I believe that this idea can be applied to the emperors of Rome and depictions of Virtus during the imperial period, cf. Chapter III.

altar to Pudicitia, over which she states, “I dedicated this altar to Plebeian Pudicitia, and I urge you, that just as our male citizens hold contests in martial valor (*certamen virtutis*), so, too, do the matrons hold contests in modesty (*pudicitia*)...”¹⁸⁴ Even though the focus of Livy’s text is the modesty of Verginia, Livy, nevertheless, compares the cultural practice of competing for a particular masculine Roman virtue, valor, or *virtus*, among men with a similar practice among Roman women, who compete for the feminine virtue of modesty, *pudicitia*. Moreover, a Roman’s *virtus* can be gained or lost in battle, as was demonstrated by Livy, who records that Marcellus expunged the *virtus* of Hannibal during the Battle at Nola. *Virtus* had to be maintained, as well, because it could fade not only over time from inertia, but it could also fade from collective memory, were martial virtue not sustained, without which honor, glory, and fame would never manifest themselves. For example, in a passage by Seneca, he says that, “*virtus* fades without adversity,” insinuating that a man’s martial valor must be kept up through battle.¹⁸⁵ Marcellus managed to cultivate his *virtus* over the life of his political and military career, first by campaigning in the First Punic War and, then, again, during the Gallic Wars. Because Marcellus was a superior soldier on the battlefield, the Senate trusted in his martial abilities and elected him consul of 222 in order to purge the Gauls and their inherent *virtus* from Rome.

Moreover, Marcellus most likely invented the idea of the *spolia opima* representing superior *virtus*. In doing so, he demonstrated to the people of Rome that his *virtus* was greater than that of any general or of the current members of the senate, including that of Cornelius Scipio, his co-consul, and especially that of Fabius Maximus, his eternal political rival. Marcellus’ *spolia opima* were paraded through the streets of Rome during his celebratory triumph, in which they were presented to the people of Rome as a visual analogue to Marcellus’ *virtus*. The visuality of the *spolia opima* as a victory trophy, placed in

¹⁸⁴ Livy 10.23: “*Hanc ego aram*” inquit “*Pudicitiae Plebeiae dedico vosque hortor, ut quod certamen virtutis viros in hac civitate tenet, hoc pudicitiae inter matronas sit...*”

¹⁸⁵ Sen. Prov. 2.4: *Marcet sine adversario virtus*. The context in which Seneca delivers this quote is not found on the battlefield, but in the arena, between two boxers, who are competing with each other for *virtus*, rendering this type of *virtus* as martial valor. The meaning of *virtus* as “valor” is a central theme in Livy, who mainly recounts military history, cf. Sarsila 2006, 203.

the Temple of Jupiter Feretrius, would have reminded the temple visitors of Marcellus' martial accomplishments, which ushered a *pax Romana* into the city of Rome, protecting the Roman people from Rome's barbarian enemies. The *spolia opima* remained Marcellus' visual manifestation of his *virtus* until he could consecrate his temple of Honos and Virtus first vowed during the Battle at Clastidium. However, Marcellus had little opportunity to spend time in Rome, and was dispatched to Ostia, and then to Nola in order to launch a counterattack against Hannibal after Rome's catastrophic defeat at Cannae, where the Romans lost their *virtus*.

When Marcellus engaged in battle with Hannibal and the Carthaginians in the Battle at Nola in 216, he once again entered into a duel pitched between two military commanders both renowned for their *virtus*. Marcellus knew that if he could muster a defeat against Hannibal in battle, by which he would wound Hannibal's *virtus*, then to the victor not only go the spoils, but also the victory, honor, glory, and self-preservation, predicated on Marcellus' own martial prowess. Even though Marcellus was incapable of completely dispatching Hannibal, he was, nevertheless, praised as the only Roman commander to achieve success against Rome's most-wanted villain. Livy extols Marcellus for expunging Hannibal's *virtus*.¹⁸⁶ Accordingly, Marcellus won the contest in *virtus*, acquiring Hannibal's *virtus* for himself. Subsequently, Marcellus amassed so much acclaim from the Roman people that he superseded every other commander of Rome's armies in martial valor and political honors, including his political nemesis Fabius Maximus, who deliberately retaliated a year later by devising a pontifical ploy to obstruct Marcellus' *honos* by indirectly coercing Marcellus to forfeit his elected consulship in 215.

However, Marcellus was able to recover his *honos* when the senate entrusted Sicily to him as his own province in 214 after the death of Hieronymous and the subsequent rebellion in Syracuse.¹⁸⁷ And it was the Siege of Syracuse that proved to be Marcellus' most challenging labor, and, thus, the worthiest

¹⁸⁶ Livy 23.45.

¹⁸⁷ Livy 24.21.

of *virtus*, which, consequently, defined Marcellus political, military, and religious consciousness. Thus, the Temple of Honos and Virtus he erected after the Siege of Syracuse stood at the gates of Rome not only as a physical symbol of Marcellus' greatest political and military accomplishments, but also as a *testimonium* of his legacy both in *honos*, as the greatest politician in Rome at the time, eclipsing Fabius Maximus, and in *virtus*, acquired at Clastidium, in the wars with Hannibal, and at the Siege of Syracuse.

I.VI: The Cult Statue of Virtus

When Marcellus finished his temple project during his fifth consulship in 208, his inaugural dedication of the temple was obstructed by the college of Roman pontiffs. According to Livy and Valerius Maximus, the pontiffs warned Marcellus, who outfitted the Temple of Honos at the Porta Capena for both Honos and Virtus, that he could not dedicate a single-cella temple to two deities. They argued that if there should occur some religious prodigy, it would be impossible to determine which of the two deities ought to receive an expiatory rite, nor was it customary for two gods to receive one sacrifice.¹⁸⁸ Plutarch adduces that, because Marcellus' completed temple project did not account for two cellae, "he began construction on another temple adjoining the first, regarding it as an omen, even though he readily resented their obstruction," indicating that Marcellus had to finish his second temple before he could inaugurate his cult.¹⁸⁹ Furthermore, Valerius Maximus writes that "the admonition of the pontiffs forced Marcellus to place the cult statues (*simulacra*) of Honos and Virtus in two different temples."¹⁹⁰ That Marcellus had

¹⁸⁸ Livy 27.25; cf. also Federico's commentary on the matter (2017, 321-4). Val. Max. 1.1.8: *in qua cum Marcellus quintum consulatum gerens templum Honori et Virtuti, Clastidio prius deinde Syracusis potitus, nuncupatis debitum votis consecrare vellet, a collegio pontificum impeditus est, negante unam cellam duobus dis recte dicari: futurum enim, si quid prodigii in ea accidisset, ne dinosceretur utri rem divinam fieri oporteret, nec duobus nisi certis dis una sacrificari solere*: "In which [community] Marcellus, taker of first Clastidium and then Syracuse, in his fifth consulship, wished to consecrate a temple to Honos and Virtus, but was obstructed by the college of pontiffs, who argued that it was not reverent to have a singular-cella for two deities. For if there should occur some prodigy there in the future, it would be impossible to recognize to which [god] a sacred rite should be performed, nor was it customary that there be one sacrifice for two gods."

¹⁸⁹ Plut. *Marc.* 28: *πάλιν ἤρξατο προσοικοδομεῖν ἕτερον, οὐ ραδίως φέρων τὴν γεγεννημένην ἀντίκρουσιν, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ οἰωνιζόμενος*. Cf. also Symmachus (*Ep.* 1.20.1), who states that "Our ancestors... located the temple of Honos and Virtus, joined together with a twin façade...there the prizes of *honos* were, where the merits of *virtus* are" (...*maiores nostri... aedes Honori atque Virtuti gemella facie iunctim locarunt commentum...ibi esse praemia honoris ubi sunt merita virtutis*).

¹⁹⁰ Val. Max. 1.1.8: *ea pontificum admonitione effectum est ut Marcellus separatis aedibus Honoris ac Virtutis simulacra statueret*.

cult statues of Honos and Virtus placed in his single-cella temple, to which the pontiffs objected, is clear, thus corroborating that these *simulacra* existed before Marcellus died in the same year. And the fact that the *simulacra* did exist demonstrates that Marcellus was obliged to approve of their appearance. Because Marcellus is the sole inventor of the cult of Virtus in Rome, he should also be considered the inventor of the image of Dea Virtus, who had never before been visually represented.¹⁹¹

After the Siege of Syracuse, Marcellus restored the Temple of Honos at the Porta Capena to house the first cult of Virtus. According to Valerius Maximus, the Temple of Honos momentarily accommodated the cult statue of Virtus before Marcellus was required to construct an additional temple for Virtus. Whether or not Marcellus reused Fabius Maximus' cult statue of Honos for his own temple will never be known; however, since a visual manifestation of Virtus never before existed, Marcellus was religiously contracted to invent one. Unfortunately, no images of Virtus survive from the late-3rd or 2nd centuries; however, around the turn of the 2nd century, numismatic manifestations of Virtus began to materialize,

¹⁹¹ My idea that Marcellus invented the image of Virtus stems from Richardson (1978, 244), who was the first to suggest that Marcellus' artist created Virtus' statue type, base on his theory that the crested bell helmet worn by Virtus on a denarius minted in 71 BCE was popular with the Roman army in the third and second centuries BCE; and, therefore, Marcellus' artist must have created her statue type. My intention is to further elaborate on this idea and demonstrate not only that it was Marcellus himself who invented Virtus' image, but also why he chose a female Amazon warrior to represent the goddess. Rebuffat-Emmanuel (1976), in his short article on epigraphical errors on an Etruscan mirror and on an unrelated Praenestine cista dating to the 4th century BCE in the Vatican Museums, points out that there is a female figure on the cista labeled *VERITUS*, whose inscription the author argues is an error for *VIRTUS*. The woman is standing among Greek heroes from the Trojan Cycle, all labeled: *MICOS*, *ACILES*, *VICTORIA*, *FERCLES*, *DIESPTR*, *IUNO*, *MIRCURIOS*, *IACOR*, *AIAX*, and *VERITUS*. The barefoot woman wears a long chiton covering her entire body and holds a helmet and a spear in her hands for Ajax (*AIAX*), while he adjusts his belt, demonstrative of the fact that the helmet and spear belongs to Ajax, not to herself. Unfortunately, the cista is so weathered that it is impossible to read all of the letters clearly. In fact, the original publisher of the cista's inscriptions, Dessau (*CIL* 14.4106.), labels her *VEPITUS*, which he conjectures may be a corruption of *VERITUS*, which may be a corruption of *VIRTUS*. But even *VEPITUS* is an optical struggle to extrapolate from this inscription. *Virtus* appears in Plautus for the first time in the 3rd century, lending credence that this cista may not depict Virtus, since it dates a century earlier than the first appearance of the word in Roman Latin. Moreover, since the inception of the word first seen in Plautus, Virtus has not deviated from its spelling, with one exception by Varro, who describes how *virilitas* had derived from *vir* (*L.L.* 5.73): *Virtus ut Viritus a virilitate*. The problem with the inscription is that the first two letters of the inscription are "V" and "E;" and since *virtus* is inextricably derived from the Latin word for man, *vir*, along with all of its meanings, *VEPITUS/VERITUS* may not be an epigraphical error for "Virtus." *Vir* is an indivisible trait integral to *virtus*, and cannot be divorced from it, or else the meaning of the word will automatically change. The connotations of "man," "manhood," "manliness," "bravery," "courage," and/or "valor" would be completely lost. An epigraphical error on the word *VERITAS* (truth) is more logical than on *VIRTUS*. However, the author (p. 873) notes that the artist (most likely not a Roman) may have meant to depict the Greek Aretē but used the Latin name that logically seemed closest to the military "excellence" of Ajax, just as the artist used Roman *Victoria* in lieu of Greek *Nike*, which is also likely possible. If this woman were meant to be a representation of Aretē, then her non-martial image as a matronly woman is logical. Nevertheless, this goddess' image does not impugn Marcellus' invention of a bare-breasted, Amazon warrior goddess to represent Roman Virtus in Roman art.

all of which were, in one way or another, associated with Marcellus, lending credence to the fact that Marcellus and the artistic representations of Virtus are inseparable.

In 101/0 BCE, a silver denarius was struck in Rome, which depicts a bust of Hercules in profile on the obverse, identified by his lion skin and club.¹⁹² In the exergue is the legend *ROMA*, indicating that the coin was minted in Rome. The exergue of the reverse bears the legend *LENT.MAR.F.*, naming the moneyer as Publius Cornelius Lentulus Marcellinus (“the Marcellan one”).¹⁹³ Marcellinus was the son of Marcus Claudius Marcellus, both praetor in 103 and the great general Marius’ chief legate, who put Marcellus in command of 3,000 Roman legionaries in 102 at the Battle of Aquae Sextiae against the German Teutones and Ambrones.¹⁹⁴ We know very little about Marcellinus himself, but he was doubtless a lineal descendent



Figure 6: Marcellinus denarius depicting Honos and Virtus on the reverse. 101/0

of Marcellus the Great.¹⁹⁵ The reverse of the coin depicts two standing figures (**Fig. 6**). The figure on the left is a bosomed female, dressed in a short, double-belted tunic, exposing her projecting knees and high boots. She wields a reverse spear in her right hand and wears a helmet with a central crest, flanked by two side feathers. She also carries a small, thin object in her left hand pressed against her body, which appears to have a hilt. This object is likely a *parazonium*. She is positioned in a *Standmotiv*, leaning on her spear, and bearing her weight on her right leg, whereas the left is bent at the knee and relaxed. Her *Standmotiv* posture is congruous with the Virtus from Cologne and the Virtus

¹⁹² *RRC* 329 (Crawford 1974, 329); *BMCRR* i.1704-24, Pl. 32.10 (Grueber erroneously dates to 89 BCE); *RE* (Wissowa) Cornelius, 230. Since Marcellinus was born into the Marcelli clan and the gens Cornelia, Hercules, on the obverse, may represent the mythical relationship between the Corneli and Hercules, e.g. Sulla claimed patronage of Hercules; whereas, the iconography on the reverse represents the patronage of Honos and Virtus by the Marcelli. The coin, therefore, has dynastic implications.

¹⁹³ Marcellinus was born around 128. His natural father was Marcellus, but his adoptive father was Publius Cornelius Lentulus, thus “Marcellinus” was chosen to distinguish him from the bloodline of the gens Cornelia. Marcellinus had a brother named Marcus Claudius Marcellus Aesernius (Cic. *Brut.* 36.136). Marcellinus should not be confused with his homonymous son, born around 106, who was *questor pro praetore* in 75-4. His other son was Gnaeus Cornelius Lentulus Marcellinus, pontifex maximus and consul of 56, cf. Sumner 1973, 91-93, 133-4 and Harlan 1995, 178.

¹⁹⁴ Sumner 1973, 91-93; Harlan 1995, 178-181. Plut. *Mar.* 20-1; Front. *Strat.* 2.4.6. Cf. also Cic. *Brut.* 36.136. This Marcellus may have been killed in a battle against the Samnites in 90, cf. Livy *Per.* 73.

¹⁹⁵ Sumner 1973, 91-93; Richardson 1978, 245.

from Budapest, which suggests that the female figure is a representation of a statue. The figure on the right, an unbearded male, wearing a cloak draped around his waist, carries a cornucopia in the crook of his left arm and crowns the female with a wreath with his extended right hand. The denarius bears no identifying legends, thus Crawford and Sydenham prematurely published their identifications as Roma and the Genius Populi Romani, respectively, without assessment of the denarius' historical significance.¹⁹⁶ Richardson, however, has certainly correctly identified them as Honos and Virtus, which has been endorsed by McDonnell and Milhous, thus proving this the earliest extant image of Honos and Virtus in Roman art. Richardson notes that the depictions of Honos and Virtus on the denarius must have closely followed their statue types.¹⁹⁷ Since it is unlikely that Marius was able to construct his temple of Honos and Virtus (financed by the spoils of the Battle of Aquae Sextiae during the Cimbrian War, which concluded in 101) before this denarius was issued, and since Marcellinus and his father Marcellus, legate of 102, were lineal descendants of Marcellus the Great, it is credible that Marcellinus' numismatic representations of Honos and Virtus were modeled on the cult statues of their illustrious martial ancestor. Richardson also notes that Virtus' helmet type was popular in Italy during the 3rd and 2nd centuries, and was worn by the Roman legionaries during this time, according to Polybius.¹⁹⁸ This supports the thesis that the likeness of the bellicose Virtus on the denarius was likely influenced by Marcellus' *simulacrum Virtutis* if Marcellus placed this helmet type on his cult statue of Virtus; otherwise, it would seem illogical to use an antiquated helmet type on a denarius minted much later, unless the artist were using an extant visual template, which would have had familial significance. Since we know nothing of Marcellinus' political or military career, and since the coin was struck roughly a year after the Marius' victory at Aquae Sextiae, then the iconography of the denarius can be interpreted as a celebration of the *honos* and *virtus* gained

¹⁹⁶ RRC 329 (Crawford 1974, 329); Sydenham 1952, 86, no. 604.

¹⁹⁷ Richardson 1978, 245. The cult statue of Honos was most likely not crowning the cult statue of Virtus since they were housed in two different cellae. Nevertheless, the iconography is a visual allegory demonstrating that success in *virtus* leads *honos* as a reward. Honos is a result of Virtus, just as a *triumphus* is the result of Victoria, who often appears crowning the emperor of Rome in imperial art.

¹⁹⁸ Richardson 1978, 244; Polyb. 6.23.12; McDonnell 2006, 148.

at Aquae Sextiae by Marcellinus' father Marcellus. Marcellus helped Marius initiate a double line of attack that routed the Germanic tribes, achieving victory. Thus, Marcellinus was attempting to position his father's military deeds in the context of their great ancestor Marcellus' own martial renown received at the Battle at Clastidium, likely for the sake of self-reflection and the preservation of his own name. Finally, Richardson proposes that the Claudii Marcelli themselves suggested to Marius that he should dedicate a new temple to Honos and Virtus, whose own *virtus* Marius believed was a personal virtue, according to Sallust, likely inspired by Marcellus the Great.¹⁹⁹



Figure 7: Aquillius denarius featuring Virtus on the obverse. 71 BCE.

In 71 BCE, a silver denarius *serratus* was struck in Rome by the moneyer Manius Aquillius that features the head of Virtus in profile on the obverse, identified by her legend *VIRTVS* (**Fig. 7**).²⁰⁰ Virtus is presented as a female warrior. Her main attribute is her

bell helmet, decorated with a long crest attached by a crest pin, and a feather appended to the side. On the reverse, a warrior, carrying a shield in his left hand, lifts a fallen female figure. The legend *SICIL* appears in the exergue and the legend *MN.AQUIL MN.F MN.N* (Manius Aquillius, son of Manius and grandson of Manius) flanks the scene. Crawford notes that the denarius commemorates the *beneficia* conferred upon Sicily by Manius Aquillius' homonymous grandfather, co-consul with the renowned general Marius in 101 – the year in which he was sent to Sicily to suppress a slave revolt, from which the consul received *imperium* and a celebratory *ovatio* in Rome.²⁰¹ Thus, the visual manifestation of Virtus represents the

¹⁹⁹ Richardson 1978, 245; Sall. *Jug.* 85.

²⁰⁰ *RRC* 401 (Crawford 1974, 412); *BMCR* i. 415-7, ii. 68-9, 72, Pl. 43.6; Weinstock 1971, 231-2; Carson 1978a, 49; Jones 1990, 322; Milhous 1992, 129-30; Kuttner 1995, image 52; McDonnell 2006, 147; Clark 2007, 156-7. The legend *III•VIR* is also present, which stands for *tresviri aere argento auro flando feriundo*: "the three moneyers who strike and cast bronze, silver and gold [coins]," cf. Carson 1978a, 9. This is also the first time that the legend *III•VIR* appears in Roman numismatics.

²⁰¹ Crawford 1978, 412; *BMCR* i.4.16; Diod. 36.10; Milhous 1992, 129-30.

consul Manius Aquillius' *virtus* in this war, whose martial valor resulted from a war waged in Sicily, which, subsequently, engendered political renown and the honor of holding *imperium* and an *ovatio*. The moneyer Manius Aquillius may have been influenced not only by Marcellus' similar achievements as compared to his grandfather's, but also by Marcellus' *simulacrum Virtutis* standing in his Temple of Honos and Virtus at the Porta Capena, whose appearance probably contributed to Virtus' likeness as a female warrior on this denarius. Moreover, the consul Manius Aquillius was another one of Marius' legates during the Cimbrian War, after which Marius constructed his own temple to Honos and Virtus on the slopes of the Velian Hill with the war's spoils, undoubtedly influenced by the Marcellan ideology of coupling Honos and Virtus as a religious analogue to their personal political and martial virtues.²⁰² Moreover, that Virtus wears a crested helmet with side feathers as was popular with the Roman soldiers of the third and second centuries lends credence to the idea that both Aquillius and Marcellinus were using a common template, namely Marcellus' cult statue of Virtus in his temple at the Porta Capena.²⁰³



Figure 8: Kalenus denarius featuring the jugate heads of Honos and Virtus on the obverse and Italia and Roma in dextrarum iunctio on the reverse. 70 BCE. American Numismatic Society.

In 70 BCE, a silver denarius *serratus* was struck in Rome by the moneyers Quintus Fufius Kalenus and Publius Mucius Scaevola [Cordus], which features a jugate image of Honos and Virtus in profile, both bearing their legends *HO* and *VIR* on the obverse (Fig. 8). In the exergue is the legend *KALENI*. Honos is a

beardless young male, crowned with laurel; and Virtus is behind him. She has no visible attributes except for her Corinthian crested helmet. On the reverse, Italia, identified by her legend (*I* & *TAL* displayed in the ligature), carries a cornucopia in her left hand and engages her right hand in a *dextrarum iunctio* with

²⁰² *ILS* 59; Fest. 344 M. (468 L.); Plut. *Fort. Rom.* 5.

²⁰³ Richardson 1978, 244.

Roma. Roma, crowned with a diadem tied at the back, and carrying fasces in the crook of her left arm, positions her right foot on a globe as sign of the realm over which she rules. She is identified by her legend *RO* to the right. She wears a chiton that reveals her right breast, belted at the waist. The legend *CORDI* in the exergue stands for Publius Mucius Scaevola [Cordus].²⁰⁴ Kalenus, a *novus homo*, was consul in 47, which attests to his *ambitio* in politics, eventually procuring a consulship 23 years after this denarius was minted. Cordus, on the other hand, was pontifex in 69, attesting to his piety towards the two gods depicted on the obverse. As for the reverse, Crawford associates its iconography with the Social Wars and the reconciliation achieved between Rome and Italy, logically made possible by *honos* and *virtus*. Reconciliation was reached by the census of 70, the same year in which this issue was struck.²⁰⁵ Clark suggests that it is possible that Marius' cult statues of Honos and Virtus may have influenced the moneyers' images of Honos and Virtus.²⁰⁶ Moreover, Vitruvius names a certain Gaius Mucius as the architect of the Marian temple of Honos and Virtus; and Richardson suggests that the architect Gaius Mucius, the moneyer and pontifex Publius Mucius Scaevola [Cordus], and the augur Quintus Mucius Scaevola, whose granddaughter was married to Marius, were all related.²⁰⁷ If so, then the coin can be interpreted as an allusion to Marius' Temple of Honos and Virtus and not an allusion to Marcellus' Honos and Virtus. This would also account for the change in helmet, where the old-fashioned crested bell helmet was exchanged for a more popular crested Corinthian type.²⁰⁸

To further illustrate the Claudii Marcelli family's deference for their great ancestor Marcellus, another denarius was struck in 49 BCE by Publius Claudius Lentulus Marcellinus (quaestor of 48), son of

²⁰⁴ *RRC* 403 (Crawford 1974, 413), Pl. 50.7; *BMCR* i.3358-63, Pl. 43.5, ii. 68-9, 72. Richardson (1978, 244) identifies her helmet as Corinthian. There are at least two dozen extant denarii; some located at the British Museum, at Harvard and at the Münzkabinett Berlin. Some of them slight variations on the reverse. Cf. also Jones 1990, 322; Carson 1978a, 50; Fears 1981, 883; Milhous 1992, 123-4; Kuttner 1995, image 51; Sear 2000, 135, no. 338; McDonnell 2006, 146-7.

²⁰⁵ Crawford 1974, 413; Sumner 1973, 92.

²⁰⁶ Clark 2007, 157-8.

²⁰⁷ Vitruv. 3.2.5, 7.*praef.*17; Richardson 1978, 244-6; Richardson (1992, 190) later suggests that the architect and the moneyer may be the same man.

²⁰⁸ Richardson 1978, 244.



Figure 9: Denarius featuring Marcellus with the spolia opima on the reverse. 49 BCE.

Gnaeus Cornelius Lentulus Marcellinus (consul of 56), grandson of Publius Claudius Lentulus Marcellinus (moneyer of 101/0), and great-grandson of Marcus Claudius Marcellus (Marius' legate of 102), which commemorates three of Marcellus' greatest achievements: winning the *spolia opima* in the Battle at Clastidium, conquering Syracuse, and earning the consulship five times.²⁰⁹ The obverse depicts a profile portrait of an aged man with an aquiline nose, which, Harlan suggests, must be an idealized portrait of Marcellus.²¹⁰ Next to his head is a *triskeles*—a well-known symbol of Sicily, as well as a familial insignia of the *gens* Claudii Marcelli.²¹¹ Around his head is the legend *MARCELLINVS*, identifying the moneyer. On the reverse, a togate man, *capite velato*, ascends the steps of a tetrastyle temple carrying a trophy adorned with a military skirt, shield, helmet, and possibly a spear in his right hand, and a *parazonium* strapped at the hip (Fig. 9). The legend identifies the man: *MARCELL COS QVINQ*: "Marcellus, consul five times." Thus, Marcellus is depicted entering the Temple of Jupiter Feretrius on the Capitoline Hill bearing the *spolia opima*, which he placed in the temple during his Gallic triumph as a symbol of his *virtus*. Marcellinus' denarius supports the proposition that his homonymous grandfather's 101/0-issue recalls Marcellus' Temple of Honos and Virtus, whose cult-statue types appear on its reverse.

No other images of Virtus are known that date to the Republican period. Thus, we must turn to numismatic representations of the imperial period to identify the iconography of the cult statue of Virtus in our search for the *Haupttypus*. As Richardson indicates, the earliest representations of the full-statue

²⁰⁹ *RRC* 439 (Crawford 1974, 460, Pl. 52.18); *BMCRR* i.567 Pl. 55.16; Sumner 1973, 91-93, 133-4, 143; Harlan (1995, 175-81) dates the denarius to 49 BCE when Marcellinus ran for questor. I agree with his assessment as an issue in 49 BCE seems logical if Marcellinus were attempting to curry favor and support; Jones 1990, 295; Stevenson 1982, 209-10; 536-7; Carson 1978a, 58.

²¹⁰ Harlan 1995, 175.

²¹¹ Crawford 1972, 460, 738; Stevenson 1982, 209: a *triskeles* (or *triquetra*) is a symbol of three human legs united at the hip.



Figure 10: Sestertius of Galba featuring Honos and Virtus. 69 CE.

types of Honos and Virtus are found on a bronze sestertius minted by Galba in 69 CE.²¹² The obverse depicts a bust of a laureate Galba. The reverse depicts Honos and Virtus with identifying legend *HONOS ET VIRTUS* around the edge (Fig. 10).²¹³ Milhous points out that the organization of the two figures takes the form first seen on the Marcellinus denarius of 101/0 BCE, with the exception that Honos does not crown Virtus with a wreath. Just like the Marcellinus denarius, Honos is a beardless youth, draped

around the waist, chest bare, and carries a cornucopia in the crook of his left arm. Rather than crowning Virtus, he holds a lance in his right hand. Virtus is a mirror image of her likeness on the Marcellinus denarius, with the exception that her right foot rests on a muscular cuirass.²¹⁴ She is dressed as a female warrior, wearing high boots, ornamented with lion pelts, and a short, double-belted tunic, exposing her knees and divesting her right breast. A crested helmet crowns her head, and she carries a *parazonium* in her right hand and a reverse spear in her left, which suggests that her position is meant to be idle, indicative of a *Standmotiv*. The iconography is clear: the Galban sestertius appropriates a precedent instituted by Marcellus, who placed the *simulacra* of Honos and Virtus in their sanctuary at the Porta Capena. Because the Galban sestertius corroborates the identification of Honos and Virtus on the Marcellinus denarius, it can be deduced that the Marcellinus denarius is our original *Haupttypus* for the image of Virtus – an Amazon. So then why did Marcellus, consul five times and conqueror of the Gauls

²¹² Richardson 1978, 244;

²¹³ *RIC 1² Galba* 474-8; *BMCRE Galba* 255-7: Mint of Rome and Lugdunum; Kraay 1956, 41, 52: Galba had four sesterius dies of this type, two of which were subsequently used by Vitellius, and Vespasian used one die in 71 CE; Sutherland 1974, 174, 182, 184 image 329; Carson 1978b, 31; Kent 1978, 287, Pl. 61.214; Stevenson 1982, 465; Milhous 1992, 138-9.

²¹⁴ Kraay 1956, 41. Milhous (1992, 138) believes that her foot rests on a boar's head, alluding to hunting; however, that Galba, a legionary general, a governor of Spain and a Soldier Emperor in 68, desired to allegorize his *imperium* along with his recreational habits is tenuous. Milhous, I believe, is retrojecting the manifestation of Virtus in hunting scenes in later Roman art, especially depicted on 3rd-century sarcophagi, which suits her hunting hypotheses in her dissertation; However, Virtus is never seen with her foot on a boar's head in hunting depictions.

and of the Syracusans, invent an Amazon to represent his *virtus* – an aristocratic quality that validated the manhood of a civilized male living in Rome?

I.VII: *Virtus Amazonia*

That Marcellus chose a barbarian Amazon for his visual rendering of *virtus*, may seem, at first, counterintuitive to the definition of *virtus* as “manliness.” However, when considering Marcellus’ military accomplishments from which he gained *virtus*, namely from his conquests over the barbarians, the choice of this barbarian model becomes transparent. Since there is a linguistic requirement which necessitates that the visual manifestation of *virtus* be a woman, there is no superior choice than an Amazon, whose gender in ancient literature and art was often considered androgynous, encompassing idealized masculine traits constituted by courage, prowess, strength, and martial valor.

The Amazons are first attested in Book III of the *Iliad* in which Homer employs the expression *Amazones antianeirai*, during a speech delivered to Helen by Priam on the ramparts of Troy. The king recalls having set out on an expedition to the land of Phrygia where he, for the first time, encountered the Amazons.²¹⁵ The epithet *antianeirai* (a feminine adjective) comprises the Greek prefix *anti* (ἀντί) and the noun *aner* (άνήρ) – the Greek word for “man,” from which *andreia* derives, equivalent to the Latin word *vir*, from which *virtus* derives. The epithet has been variously translated as “those equivalent to men,” “those who fight like men,” and “manlike.”²¹⁶ Blok notes that the prefix “anti” is never applied in epic with the connotation of “fighting against” or “opposite,” but its figurative use, rather, means “equivalent to;” and people who are “anti” to one another were regarded as equals.²¹⁷ Even though Homer does not delve into the mythical tradition of the Amazons, we can deduce from the epithet *antianeirai* that, as early as the 8th century, the Amazons were considered equal to men. The Greek word *Amazones*, on the other hand, remains controversial, namely because its origins are obscure. The current

²¹⁵ Hom. *Il.* 3.181-90, and again at 6.186: Ἀμαζόνες ἀντιάνειραι; quoted by Strabo at 12.24.

²¹⁶ Blok 1995, 145-94; Pöhlauer 2010, 12. Mayor 2014, 22-3.

²¹⁷ Blok 1995, 170.

scholarly consensus is that the word stems from an ancient foreign language from the east, and was not originally Greek; however, from what language it originally stemmed is currently unknown. Nevertheless, the designation is an ethnonym naming an entire ethnic group of people; and the Homeric epithet *antianeirai*, a feminine adjective, indicates that the gender of this ethnic group was female.²¹⁸

In the 5th century, Aeschylus, in his tragedy *Promethius Bound*, designates the Amazons as “virgins, fearless in battle, who inhabit the lands of Colchis,” and as “an army of man-haters, near the Caucasus Mountains.”²¹⁹ Aeschylus’ synopsis of the Amazons provides the earliest testimony of the identity of the Amazons as portrayed in 5th-century Athens. The Amazons were a race of warrior women, who foreswore men in marriage, and who inhabited the lands beyond Greece, i.e. beyond civilization.²²⁰ Aeschylus’ account is validated by the 5th-century historian Herodotus, who recounts the origin-story of the *Sauromatae* (Sarmatians), who he believes were scions of the Amazons and Scythians.²²¹ Similarly, Pliny asserts that the Amazons were the wives of the Sarmatians, descendants of the *Medes*, who were once rulers of Asia before they were defeated by the Scythians, and recipients of the name *Medes* from Medea, after she fled Athens and settled in Colchis, as narrated by Herodotus.²²²

Moreover, Strabo also asserts that the Amazons originated around the Caucasus Mountains in the regions of Albania, Iberia (of the Caucasus region), and Armenia, near the Scythians, neighbors and kinsmen of the Sarmatians; and that they also inhabited Asia Minor (in the regions of Mysia, Caria, and Lydia, according to Ephorus), having founded the coastal cities of Ephesus, Smyrna, Cyme, Myrina, and also Themiscyra on the Thermodon in Pontus.²²³ Pliny, in his compendium of geographical locales around

²¹⁸ Zografou 1972, 132-34; Blok 1995, 159, 166; Mayor 2014, 22-5.

²¹⁹ Aesch. *Prom.* 415-6: Κολχίδος τε χάς ἔνοικοι παρθένοι μάχας ἄτρεστοι; 719-724: πρὸς αὐτὸν Καύκασον... ἐνθ’ Ἀμαζόνων στρατὸν ἦξις συγάνορ.

²²⁰ Eur. (*Herak.* 408-9) also locates the Amazons at the Black Sea at Maiotis in Pontus.

²²¹ *Sauromatae* is a variant spelling of *Sarmatae*, cf. Pliny (*NH* 4.80), who states that *Sauromatae* is the Greek spelling of *Sarmatae*; see also, Polyb. 25.1; Hdt. 4.21, 4.106, 4.110-117; Pliny *NH* 6.39-40.

²²² Pliny *NH* 6.19; Hdt. 4.1; 7.62.

²²³ Strab. 11.3.3, 11.4.1, 11.5.1-4, 12.3.21-2 (Ephorus), 12.8.6, 12.8.9; Pliny *NH* 5.10, 5.19.

the Mediterranean, continues to follow the projected course of the Scythian/Sarmatian tribes, who, by his own time, emigrated into, and abounded in Europe. Pliny states that the tribes that settled around the Danube were branch-races of the Scythians, including the Getae, whom the Romans call Dacians, the Sarmatians, the Aorsi, the Alani, the Rhexolani, and, on the German frontiers, the Sarmatian Iazyges, the Suebi, the Sardi, and the Siraci. Pliny also adduces that the Scythian name had spread in every direction, from Sarmatia to Germania.²²⁴ Thus, we can extrapolate from the ancient historians that the Greeks and the Romans believed that the historical Scythian and Sarmatian tribes were related to the Amazons through marriage and procreation, and also that these tribes disseminated the cultural influence of the Amazons to the north and west, which explains why these tribes' lifestyles were considered nomadic, uncivilized, and barbarous.

As for the Amazons themselves, Diodorus Siculus, a 1st-century BCE Greek historian from Sicily, gives an account on the genesis of the Amazons, originally narrated by the 3rd-century BCE mythographer Dionysius [*Scytobrachion*], whose mythological corpus is unfortunately lost; however, his works were famous, and they greatly influenced many subsequent ancient historians and mythographers.²²⁵ Diodorus recounts that the Amazons, “greatly admired for their *andreia*,” their “manly courage” (*τεθαυμασμένα μεγάλως ἐπ’ ἀνδρείᾳ*), were the daughters of Ares, who originated in Libya – a country on the periphery of the civilized world, ruled by women; and, there, they lead a life unlike that of the Greeks.²²⁶ They were trained in the art of war from an early age, and were required to serve in the military, during which time they retained their virginity, only procreating with men outside of their military duties, but, nevertheless, maintained autonomy, and the affairs of their state themselves. The Amazonian men did not partake in military campaigns, and, like married Greek women, exhausted their days in the house, rearing the

²²⁴ Pliny *NH* 4.80-3; Tacitus also locates the western frontier of the territory of the Sarmatians, cf. Tac. *Germ.* 1.1, 46.1-3.

²²⁵ For Dionysius, cf. Christy Constantakopoulou. 2010. *Dionysios Scytobrachion (32)*, in I. Worthington, ed. *Brill's New Jacoby*. Leiden; C.H. Oldfather (trans.) 2000. *Diodorus of Sicily: in Ten Volumes II, Books II. 35-IV.58*, pp. 247, no. 2.

²²⁶ *Andreia* is also used by Apollod. to describe the virtues of Amazons; cf. 2.5.9.

children.²²⁷ If a girl were born into the world, her chest was seared before puberty because breasts were considered to be a limitation in warfare (or, according to the mythographer Apollodorus, just the right breast in order to better throw spears); and because they were deprived of their breasts (*μαστοί/μαζοί* (Ionic); *mastoi/mazoi*), they were called by the Greeks *Ἀμαζόνες* (“Amazons”).²²⁸ As for their piety towards to the gods, the Amazons allied themselves to the goddess Athena, because her way of living was like their own, just as both Athena and the Amazons adhered to the ideals of virginity and of manly courage (*τῆς ἀνδρείας*).²²⁹

Diodorus further narrates that the descendants of the Libyan Amazons settled along the Thermodon in Pontus, near the territory of the Scythians, also called Sarmatians, who dwelled in the Caucasus Mountains, and near the Sea of Azov, the Bosphorus, and the Don River.²³⁰ The rulers of the Scythians were powerful women, trained in acts of warfare, and were not inferior to men “in deeds of manly courage/valor” (*ἀνδρείαις*). When Cyrus, the king of the Persians, invaded Scythia, the Scythian queen and her army decimated the Persians, took Cyrus prisoner, and, subsequently, killed him. Thereafter, the Scythian nation was reorganized into the nation of the Amazons, whose capital was Themiscyra in Pontus on the Thermodon. The city was ruled by the Amazons into the days of Alexander the Great, who met, and copulated with their queen, Thallestris, said to be superior “in strength and in manly courage/martial valor” (*ἀλκῇ τε καὶ ἀνδρείᾳ*).²³¹ The tribe of the Amazons was a matriarchy, ruled by one queen, outstanding “in power and in strength (*ἀλκῇ καὶ ρώμῃ*), who called herself the daughter of Ares, god of war. Renowned “in excellence and fame” (*ἀρετῇ τε καὶ δόξης*), she established law, led her warriors in “contests in warfare” (*πολεμικοὺς ἀγῶνας*), and excelled in her office as a military general

²²⁷ Diod. 2.46, 3.52-5; Apollod. 2.5.9.

²²⁸ This is a mythological *aition* that explains for the Greeks the unusual word, which, as we now know, is not Greek, and, therefore, does not mean “without a breast.” That the Amazons had both of their breasts, albeit one often uncovered, is corroborated by their innumerable representations in Greek and Roman art.

²²⁹ Diod. 3.71.

²³⁰ Diod. 2.43, 3.34, 3.52, for reference to Sarmatians, cf. 4.45; Hdt. (4.16, 4.110-117) states that the Scythians called themselves *Σκολότες* (*Skoloti*), and that the Greeks called them *Scythians*; Pliny *NH* 6.19.

²³¹ Diod. 2.44-5; 7.77. For Thallestris, cf. also Curtius 6.5.24-32; Justin 12.3.5-7; Plut. *Alex.* 46.

(στρατηγία).²³² The Amazons were so distinguished “in manly courage/valor” (ἀνδρεία) that they conquered much of their neighboring territories, including large parts of Asia and Europe.²³³

The episodes of the Amazons chronicled by Diodorus give us an insightful ancient perspective on the genesis of the Amazons and their history as a mythical society of warrior women, living on the periphery of the civilized world, as viewed through the lens of a Greek historian living in Sicily during the 1st century BCE. Diodorus’ descriptions of the Amazons as powerful, fearless, and bellicose women, whose virtues include strength (ἀλκή), might (ῥώμη), excellence (ἀρετή), fame (δόξα), leadership (στρατηγία), and, especially, manly bravery (ἀνδρεία) gained in contests in warfare (πολεμικοί ἀγῶνες), are reminiscent of the ways in which Cicero, Livy, Polybius, and Plutarch define the qualities of Marcellus. Were Diodorus’ Amazonian accounts (*apud* the lost works of the 3rd-century mythographer Dionysius [Scytobrachion]) current in the greater part of Magna Graecia, and especially in Sicily during the late-3rd century, then it is no great wonder that Marcellus, a Hellenocentric Roman commander, privy to Greek culture while stationed in Syracuse, selected an Amazon to be his model for Virtus, since Amazons were characterized as “a match of men,” and warriors of superior martial behavior on the battlefield, who exuded ἀνδρεία (manliness), reasonably equivalent to the martial meaning of *virtus*. No artistic representations of the Amazons are known to have come from Syracuse during the Siege in 212, namely because Polybius and Plutarch are silent on the matter of which divine statues were spoliated, naming none; however, there were public sculptural representations of Amazons that decorated the religious landscape of Rome and Magna Graecia before the siege occurred.

An early-5th century painted terracotta Amazon, largely fragmentary, comprising only her torso, left arm, right leg, and shield, was excavated on the Esquiline Hill in 1874, which may have been part of a larger Amazonomachy composition, attesting to the circulation of Greek influence in Rome since the

²³² Diod. 2.45.

²³³ Diod. 2.44.

founding of the Republic. According to Lulof, the technique used to make the terracotta Amazon is comparable to terracotta statues found throughout Magna Graecia, which served as decorative architectural features, dating to the same period.²³⁴ Greek Amazons, such as the Esquiline Amazon, which was inextricably influenced by Greek terracotta workshops in Magna Graecia, may have served as physical and visual agencies of mythical *andreia*, supporting Marcellus' choice of an Amazon warrior as a visual analogue to Roman *virtus*.

The paucity of sculptural representations of the Amazons from Sicily is surprising; however, this does not necessarily indicate that there were very few in existence, especially since copious objects made in Magna Graecia at this time were fabricated from terracotta, indicated by the many Greek coroplastic workshops in southern Italy and Sicily; and the artists of these workshops were heavily influenced by mainland productions, especially Attic productions, attested by the abundance of terracotta kouroi and korai excavated in Sicily.²³⁵ Furthermore, there is a large corpus of 5th- and 4th-century Greek vases depicting Amazons from Magna Graecia, anthologized by Bothmer, many from Sicily, including: the famous red-figure volute-krater from Gela attributed to the Niobid Painter (ca. 470-445), which depicts a large Amazonomachy between four Greeks and six Amazons; a red-figure column-krater featuring an Amazonomachy from Noto; a red-figure Amazon calyx-krater from Camarina; as well as a red-figure

²³⁴ Lulof 2007; Touchette (pg. 303) suggests that the Amazon may have been created by the Greek artists Damophilus and Gorgasus, who decorated the temple of Ceres in Rome, dedicated in 493 BCE (Plin.35.154), cf. Lori-Ann Touchette. 2015. *Archaism and Classicism* Ch. 3.6, in E.A. Friedland, M.G. Sobocinski, E.K. Gazda (eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Sculpture*. Oxford, pp. 292-306.

²³⁵ For the terracotta workshops in Magna Graecia, cf. Ferruzza, M.L. 2016. *Ancient Terracottas from South Italy and Sicily in the J. Paul Getty Museum*. Getty, Los Angeles. Note, on pp. 110-1, a terracotta amazon from Tarentum; and see also Holloway 1975 for the influence of eastern Greek sculptural styles on western Greek sculptural workshops in south Italy and Sicily during the late Archaic and early Classical periods.



Figure 11: Heracles fighting an Amazon. Temple E at Selinus, ca. 470-460 BCE.

Amazon calyx-krater from Leontini – all of which testify to the extensive dissemination of the Amazons throughout many of the areas once traversed by Marcellus.²³⁶

Furthermore, a well-preserved metope featuring an abbreviated Heraclean Amazonomachy comes from the Doric frieze of Temple E at Selinus, Sicily (ca. 470-460) (Fig. 11).²³⁷ Heracles, stylistically influenced by Attic prototypes, is identified by his lion-skin draped over his



Figure 12: Amazonomachy from unknown building at Selinus, ca. 5th century BCE.

neck, shoulders, and left arm.²³⁸

He aggressively attacks an Amazon, clutching her cap with his left hand, and trampling her right foot with his left. The Amazon, most likely Hippolyte, wears a short chiton (the archetypal

Amazonian costume), high on the thigh, and a corselet covering her torso. She wields a battle-axe in her right hand, with which she intends to strike the Greek hero. Moreover, it should be noted that the Amazon carries on her person a short-sword, equivalent to a *parazonium*, located on her left hip, the hilt of which crosses her left arm. The *parazonium* must logically be suspended by a balteus across her chest (here,

²³⁶ For the Gela Krater, see Bothmer, 1957, 161, 166-7, Pl. 74.3; for the Noto Krater, cf. *ibid.* 177, Pl. 77.5; for the Kamarina Krater, cf. *ibid.*, 196; for the Leontini krater, cf. *ibid.* 198; cf. also the Index of Collections, *ibid.* pp. 235-50; and P. Devambez. 1981. s.v. "Amazones," *LIMC* 1, pp. 586-655.

²³⁷ Holloway 1975, 19-26, Figs. 126-8, p. 94; For the publication of the Amazonomachy metope, cf. J. Bovio-Marconi. 1958. *Relievi inediti di Selinunte*, in *Arch. Class.* 10, pp. 55-9 and Figs. 118-9 on pp. 19, 22.

²³⁸ Holloway 1975, 22-3.

hidden underneath her corselet) – an attribute and stylistic motif which later became a canonical characteristic of Virtus. Similarly, two limestone metopes from Selinus, dating to the same period, and attributed to another Ionic frieze that once adorned an unknown building, exhibit two more Amazonomachies (**Fig. 12**).²³⁹ Although the metopes are weathered, the iconography can still be deciphered. Depicted on the first metope, an armed warrior, possibly a hoplite, wielding a shield in his left hand and a weapon in his right, attacks a collapsed Amazon, who wears a short chiton and a crested helmet. On the second metope, albeit broken, another male warrior, identified by his genitals, attacks another collapsed Amazon, bosomed, who wears a short Amazonian chiton with ruffled edges. Thus, before the Siege of Syracuse in 212, an artistic tradition of Amazons and Amazonomachies permeated the visual culture of Rome and of Magna Graecia – a visual corpus of which Marcellus was undoubtedly conscious at home and abroad, and one which must have reinforced his decision to select an Amazonian model for his ideal form of Virtus.

Moreover, in his excursus on Marcellus' *ovatio*, Livy mentions that Marcellus commissioned a statue of "Captured Syracuse," as a visual allegory of his military success. The allegorical statue attests to the fact that he was influenced by regal ideologies of Hellenistic rulers on conquests and victories, likely derived from the royal court of Hiero II, a representative of Hellenistic kingship.²⁴⁰ Because Syracuse was replete with Greek works of art, both domestic and foreign, there surely would have been manifestations of Amazons within the city, especially in scenes of both painted and sculptural Amazonomachies. These scenes of Amazonomachies often represented mythological allegories of historical conquests against enemies pitched in battle who possess equal or greater military *virtus* than the protagonists. The ideology of using Amazonomachies as mythological analogues for historical events seems to have been invented

²³⁹ Holloway 1975, 19-22, Figs. 118-9, p. 92; Bovio-Marconi. 1958, pp. 55-9 and Pls. 16, 17.

²⁴⁰ Livy 26.21; Paus. (6.12, 6.15) states that Hiero II had portrait-statues of Hiero II on foot and on horseback, which may also have contributed to Marcellus' own self-portrait commission, which was sent to the temple of Athena at Lindos; Veit 2013, 32-5.

by the 6th-century mainland Greeks. These myth-historical allegories became popular and were replicated by subsequent Greeks (especially the Athenians), as well as the Romans for their own ideological political similes, as shown by the Esquiline Amazon discovered in Rome, by the Heraclean Amazonomachy from Temple E at Selinus, and by the unattributed metopes also from Selinus. This allegorical ideal, I believe, motivated Marcellus to appropriate the image of a Greek Amazon along with her political ideologies and propagandistic utility attributed to the Amazons by the Greeks as a visual analogue to his own political and martial ideals. The Amazonian cult-statue of Virtus represented his own *virtus* acquired through battle against Rome's foreign enemies living on the fringes of Roman civilization, namely the Gauls, the Syracusans, and Carthaginians – Rome's own *Amazones antianeirai*.

An expedition to the east, although admittedly unattested, could have also reinforced Marcellus' decision to choose a Greek Amazon to be his archetypal model for the goddess Virtus, since sculptural representations of the Amazons pervaded the repertoire of Greek visual culture since the late-6th century. A journey to the east would also explain his knowledge of and reverence both for the Pythian Apollo at Delphi, to whom he dedicated a golden bowl after the Battle at Clastidium, and for the Lindian Athena, to whom he dedicated his own portrait statue with his illustrious epigram, noted above.²⁴¹ Were Marcellus to have visited the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, for example, he would have been exposed to free-standing representations of 5th-century bronze Amazons. The Ephesian Amazons were regularly copied by subsequent Greek and Roman workshops and doubtless influenced subsequent images of Amazons in Greece, Rome, and Sicily. That the iconography of the Ephesian Amazons influenced the iconography of Marcellus' Virtus is almost certain, attested by their typological similarities.

According to Pliny, there was a contest in Amazons among the greatest sculptors of Greece at the time – Polycleitus, Pheidias, Cresilas, Cydon, and Phradmon – at the Temple of Artemis Ephesia as to which

²⁴¹ Plut. *Marc.* 8, 30.

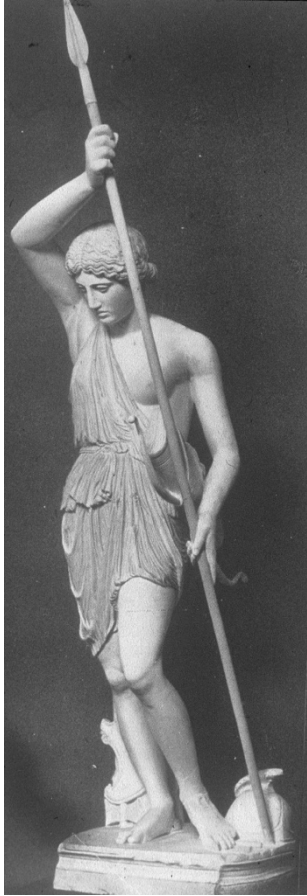


Figure 13: Reconstruction of the Mattei Type Amazon.

of their fabricated Amazons was the best. Pliny nominates Polycleitus' Amazon as the winner, Pheidias' coming in second, and Cresilas' wounded Amazon in third.²⁴² And Lucian adduces that Pheidias' Amazon leaned on her spear.²⁴³ Only marble Roman copies of the Ephesian Amazons survive; however, these copies may help us better understand the typology of singular, free-standing Amazons by which Marcellus was likely influenced in his selection of iconographical attributes for Virtus.²⁴⁴ The extant Roman copies of Ephesian Amazons have been established into several types. They are known as the Lansdowne type, the Capitoline (or Sosicles) type, the Mattei type, and the Loukou type, which Harrison attributes to Pheidias.²⁴⁵ It is important to note that all types of Amazons are dressed in short chitons, none in oriental clothing, nor are they in full battle costume; however, all but one carried a spear.²⁴⁶

The Mattei type leans on her spear, clutched in both hands (**Fig. 13**). She wears a short chiton, belted at the waist, similar to the Amazonian costume Virtus wears in her portraits, either single, or double-belted. Moreover, the Amazon reveals her left breast, just as Virtus does with her right. Marcellus may have been following the tradition of bare-breasted Amazons albeit unaware of the Greek significance of the bare breast, namely that the bare right breast



Figure 14: Nike from the Temple of Athena at Syracuse, ca. 480 BCE.

²⁴² Pliny *NH*, 34.53, 34.75; cf. Harrison 1982, 81-85 for a discussion on the contest.

²⁴³ Lucian *Images* (*Essays on Portraiture*), 4; cf. also 6.

²⁴⁴ Cf. Bothmer 1957, 216-223 for the catalogue of extant representations of the Ephesian Amazons.

²⁴⁵ Ridgway 1974, 2, 17-8; see *ibid.* 7-13 for her description of the Lansdowne type; Devambez 1976; Harrison 1982; see *ibid.*

76-9 for her investigation on the Lansdowne type. Cf. also Walter-Karydi 2016/2017 170-2. Boardman noticed that the Lansdowne Amazon is wearing a broken rein as a substitute for a girdle, in which case he identifies her with Hippolyte, who lost her belt to Heracles, cf. J. Boardman. 1980. *The Amazon's Belt*. *AJA* 84, pp. 181-2.

²⁴⁶ Harrison 1982, 85.

signifies lust, whereas the bare left breast represents motherhood.²⁴⁷ More likely, however, he may have chosen to reveal Virtus' right breast in order to articulate her divine providence. A marble Nike, thought to be an acroterion from the Temple of Athena at Syracuse, constructed after the Syracusan victory against Carthage in 480, reveals her right breast (keeping her left covered by her drapery), neither symbolizing lust nor motherhood, but most likely emblemizing her divinity (**Fig. 14**).²⁴⁸ And the Nike



Figure 15: The Capitoline Type Amazon. Ca. 5th century BCE.

acroterion on the temple of Athena in Syracuse would not have escaped the notice of Marcellus, who is said to have left the temple untouched and unspoiled due to his piety towards the gods.

Similar to the Mattei Amazon, the Capitoline type (ca. 5th century) wears a short chiton, belted at the waist (**Fig. 15**). This time, however, she reveals her right breast, congruous to the appearance of Virtus. The Capitoline Amazon also once wielded a spear in her right hand (the right arm has been incorrectly restored). Her spear, her bare right breast, and her contrapposto stance are reminiscent of subsequent representations of Virtus.²⁴⁹ However, it is the Loukou Amazon (ca. 440 BCE), demonstrated by Harrison to be the type created by Pheidias, that provides the best Amazonian model for Virtus

(**Fig. 16**).²⁵⁰ Discovered at the estate of Herodes Atticus at Loukou, the eponymous piece was transformed into a caryatid, and must have been greatly admired by Herodes Atticus.²⁵¹ She wears a heavy, but short chiton, draped from her right shoulder, which divests her left

²⁴⁷ See Ridgway 1974, 5-6 for her description of the Mattei type, who dates this type to the 4th century; and see Harrison 1982, 70-6 for her investigation and 4th-century date; see *ibid.* pp. 86-7 and no. 180 for the significance of the bare breast.

²⁴⁸ Holloway 1975, 35, Fig. 223, p. 130.

²⁴⁹ Cf. Walter-Karydi (170-1, 2016/2017) and Ridgway (1974, 6-7) for their descriptions on the Capitoline type. The Ephesus type, dated to the 5th century, may also be a good comparandum for Virtus; however, only one fragmentary relief of this type survives, but Ridgway believes that it could be a pendant to the Capitoline type, cf. p. 6; cf. Harrison 1982, 79-81 for her examination of the Ephesus Amazon; For the original publication of the Ephesus type, see F. Eichler. 1956-1958. *Eine neue Amazone und andere Skulpturen aus dem Theater von Ephesos*. *ÖJh* 43, pp. 7-18.

²⁵⁰ Harrison 1982, 65-7.

²⁵¹ Ridgway 1974, 5.



Figure 16: The Loukou Type Amazon. Ca. 440 BCE.

breast, and exposes her knees. The chiton is double-belted at the waist, similar to the chitons worn by manifestations of Virtus in historic reliefs of the imperial period. She bears her weight on her right leg, projecting her right hip, and freeing her left leg.²⁵² Her posture resembles that of the Virtus from Cologne (**Fig. 1**), the Virtus from Budapest (**Fig. 2**), and her likenesses on the Marcellinus denarius (**Fig. 6**) and on the sestertius minted by Galba (**Fig. 10**). Moreover, Harrison argues that the diagonal lines of the drapery also suggest that she was leaning on a spear, just as Lucian had originally described Pheidias' Ephesian Amazon, and that the leaning-on-a-spear stance may have been a thoroughly recognizable motif at the time.²⁵³ Thus, if a helmet, a *parazonium*, and a pair of boots were added to the Loukou Amazon, her image would be identical to Virtus, thereby rendering the Loukou Amazon the closest comparandum for Marcellus' cult statue of Virtus created for his temple. And since many copies of the Ephesian Amazons materialized in Rome, it would be inconceivable to imagine that there did not exist copies in Magna Graecia and in Sicily, where Marcellus

would have been conscious of their existence. As for the *parazonium* which

Virtus often wields in her portraits, the Amazon from Temple E at Selinus offers a suitable example of an Amazon carrying such a weapon. Lastly, as for Virtus' helmet, many Amazons on black and red-figure vases wear helmets of various types, including crested helmets.²⁵⁴ One of the Amazons from the metopes from Selinus (**Fig. 12**) displays a large, crested helmet; and two Piraeus

²⁵² Harrison 1982, 67.

²⁵³ Harrison 1982, 67-8.

²⁵⁴ For Amazons on black and red-figure vases with various helmet types, see Bothmer 1957.

reliefs, which depict copies of the individual Amazonomachies from the shield of Athena Parthenos exhibit Amazons wearing large, crested helmets, similar to Virtus' (Fig. 17).²⁵⁵



Figure 17: One of the Piraeus Reliefs depicting an Amazon with crested helmet.

Moreover, Marcellus would have been conscious of the existence of myth-political iconography, particularly in the Greek use of Amazons as mythical analogues to real historical enemies, attested by his attention to and appreciation for Greek art and religion and his adoption of Greek customs, such as his Hellenistic displays of triumphs, his gifts to Hiero II, his dedications to the Pythian Apollo, to the Samothracian Cabeiri, and to the Lindian Athena, his commission of the personified statue of "Captured Syracuse," and his creation of the cult statue of Virtus, modeled on a Greek prototype. Thus, Marcellus, heavily influenced by Greek culture, adopted the allegorical correlations contrived by the Greeks between myth and reality, and applied this ideological relationship to his own reality in Roman warfare and in Roman martial traditions, which no other Roman had done before him. During the mid-Republic, the Romans were well aware of the glory which Roman *virtus* forged for the victor in Roman conquests; however, Marcellus was the first to apply the coveted characteristics of Roman *virtus* to his enemies, thus pioneering a new way to understand how *virtus* manifests itself, i.e. where it comes from and how to obtain it in order to achieve superior martial glory.

And because the Amazons were also believed to be distant myth-historical figures, the progenitors of the historical races of men, namely the Scythians and the Sarmatians, whose many tribes emigrated to Europe, Marcellus, on the one hand, while battling the Gauls and their Celtic and German

²⁵⁵For the Piraeus reliefs, see Bothmer 1957, 210-214, Pls. 87.5, 87.6.

mercenaries during the Gallic Wars, may have conceived these barbarian nations to be descendants of the Amazons. On the other hand, if he did not believe in a lineal connection, then he inevitably likened the historical Gauls and their German allies to the mythological Amazons, particularly since the Gallic and Germanic tribes comprised nomadic races, many of whom battled on horseback and threw spears. Moreover, when the Gauls invaded the *patria* in the north, Marcellus would have recalled two things: first, that, in 390, the Gauls sacked and burned the city of Rome – an indelible tragedy endured by Rome; and second, only 90 years earlier, the Persians sacked and burned the city of Athens, resulting in the production of myth-political art, namely Amazonomachies, symbolizing the defeat of the barbarian “other,” which spread across the Mediterranean, Magna Graecia, and even Rome. In either case, Marcellus allegorized the Gauls and the Germans (and likely the Carthaginians and the Syracusans) as Amazons – barbarian foreigners who possessed formidable collective *virtus* and challenged the supremacy of the Roman military, and, more gravely, threatened the existence of Rome.

I.VIII: Conclusion

During the Gallic Wars and right before the Battle at Clastidium in 222, Marcellus vowed a temple to the Amazon goddess Virtus, perhaps first recognizing that *virtus* derived from battle against the barbarians. However, the vow was left unfulfilled for almost 15 years. Six years later, in 216, when Marcellus pursued Hannibal across Campania, he recognized that, once again, a foreign and barbarian enemy had trespassed on native soil with impunity – another allegorical “Amazon” that threatened the supremacy of Rome. He knew that if he could engage in combat with Hannibal, he could pitch his *virtus* against Hannibal’s – Marcellus’ closest and most challenging match in martial valor. If Marcellus could gain a victory against Hannibal in battle, then he could claim that he defeated the *virtus* of Hannibal and that his *virtus* was superior, not only to the *virtus* of the Carthaginians, but also to the *virtus* of his Roman colleagues. Consequently, Marcellus could reap a reputation in *honor*, *fama*, and *gloria* – the same virtues ascribed to the Amazons in the Greek tradition. Unfortunately, Marcellus was never able to kill Hannibal.

Nevertheless, he received valorous accolades from the historians for being the first Roman to successfully rout the barbarian leader.

Four years later, in 212, when the pro-Carthaginian Syracusans renounced the patronage of Rome, thereby publicly declaring that they considered themselves a foreign people, Marcellus was compelled to maintain the integrity of Rome's reputation in military supremacy and in justice by defeating the collective *virtus* of the Syracusans. Sometime during the Siege of Syracuse, he renewed his vow to Virtus, who, he must have believed, granted him the *virtus* he needed for victory. And sometime between 211 and 208, Marcellus fulfilled his vow to Virtus and invented an image for the goddess. He chose a Romanized Amazon type, influenced by the Ephesian Loukou type, to represent the barbarians he defeated, but also one that conformed to the principal characteristics of *virtus*.

The virtues of the Greek Amazons, as narrated in the mythological traditions in Sicily, must have contributed to Marcellus' decision to create the image of the goddess Virtus in the likeness of an Amazon. First, because of a linguistic necessity in Latin, Marcellus was required to design Virtus as a female. Investigating possible female prototypes in the corpus of mythological characters, Marcellus would have been aware of the abundance of representations of Amazons in sculpture and in vase painting found across the Mediterranean, from Asia Minor to Athens, and from Magna Graecia to Rome. The Amazons were foremost warriors, devoted to their military courage and martial valor, just as was Marcellus. They were also identified by Homer as *antianeirai*, or "equal to men," indicative of their "manliness" – an intrinsic quality of a warrior. This epithet, the first epithet applied to the Amazons in history, would have reconciled the need for a female emblem with the martial characteristics of *virtus*, thus rendering an Amazon warrior an appropriate archetype for the deification of Marcellus' principal virtue *virtus*, which inherently possessed masculine connotations. Moreover, the Amazons are described as possessing the virtues of strength (ἀλκή), might (ῥώμη), excellence (ἀρετή), fame (δόξα), leadership (στρατηγία), and, above all, martial valor (ἀνδρεία), which they cultivated in battle contests (πολεμικούς ἀγῶνας), according

to Diodorus – all of the virtues with which Marcellus identified. Therefore, the Amazonian likeness of Virtus was never perceived as a negative image; on the contrary, her image served as the mythological analogue to Rome’s barbarian enemies and represented *the* prize to be won on the battlefield: *virtus*. Her Amazonian image in Roman arms and armor also exemplified the *virtus* of Marcellus himself – an emblem of military and masculine characteristics with which he could self-identify. The Amazonian goddess became a positive reflection of Marcellus’ military might, martial valor, and manliness, achieved through his unparalleled accomplishments in Roman warfare against the Gauls, the Germans, the Carthaginians, and the Syracusans. Thus, the battle-hardened goddess Virtus, spear and *parazonium* at the ready, stood at the gates of Rome not only as a monumental beacon of Rome’s military supremacy, symbolically shielding the ramparts of Rome from her barbarian enemies, but also as an unequivocal visual proclamation of *virtus Marcelli*, preserving within the collective memory of the Roman consciousness the honor, glory, fame, respect, and martial legacy of Rome’s Mighty Star *ad infinitum*.

Chapter II

The Treatment of *Virtus* in the Age of Caesar and the Rise of Imperial *Virtus*

II.I: *Virtus*, *Aretē*, and *Andreia* in the Ancient Authors

“Let us now introduce the bright splendor of the stars, as he was superior in arms and in politics, the divine Julius, the clearest image of true martial valor (*virtutis*)...”¹

Valerius Maximus 3.2.19

In July of 44, during the funeral games held by Octavian for his adoptive father Julius Caesar, a comet scorched the day’s sky, which was interpreted as a celestial sign from the gods, and, consequently, exploited as an emblem of dynastic propaganda by Octavian in order to allegorize the apotheosis of Caesar.² This passage by Valerius Maximus not only praises the divine Julius Caesar with the metonymic *siderum clarum decus*, “the bright splendor of the stars,” but it is also a revelatory passage concerning the way in which Caesar’s *virtus* was characterized in the late Republic. Of the myriad Republican virtues which Valerius Maximus could have ascribed to Caesar as his defining characteristic, he chose to append Caesar’s apotheosis – the capstone of distinction in eternal fame and glory – to Caesar’s *virtus*, his martial valor.

By the late Republic, the meaning of *virtus* had been co-opted by the Stoics and by Roman politicians and orators who followed this school of thought. These philosophical men desired to obtain honor and glory, which were both originally predicated on martial excellence, but had no military experience to justify a claim to *virtus* for themselves. Just as Publilius Syrus states in one of his martial maxims: “a deed of *virtus* is a deed of *gloria*,” by which he implies that there is no glory without valor.³

¹ *Sed ut armorum et togae superius, nunc etiam siderum clarum decus, divum Iulium, certissimam verae virtutis effigiem, repraesentemus.* The use of *virtus* here is purely martial in nature; for, Valerius Maximus continues the line with an anecdote about how his actions in combat, during a fierce battle against the Nervii tribe in 57, spread bravery (*fortitudinem*) throughout his army. Cf. 6.9.15 for a similar passage, in which Valerius Maximus refers to Caesar as *clarissimum mundi sidus*. For the battle, cf. Caes. *Bell. Gall.* 2.25; Plut. *Caes.* 20.

² Plin. *Nat. Hist.* 2.23.94 = Aug. *Commentarii de vita sua* fr. 6; Sen. *Nat. Quae.* 7.17.2; Ovid. *Met.* 15.745-851; Suet. *Iul.* 88; Dio 45.7; Julius Obsequens 68; Servius Danielis on *Aen.* 1.287, 6.790, 8.681, on *Ecl.* 9.47; Ramsey and Licht 1997; Pandey 2013.

³ Publil. Syr. 590: *quidquid fit cum virtute fit cum gloria.* Cf. also Sarsila 2006, 83.

And it is this glory through *virtus* that all Roman men desired to obtain for themselves. Publilius Syrus also acutely forewarns that, “all *virtus* lies dormant unless it is awakened by wide recognition (*fama*).”⁴ And Cicero, too, asserts that the path to honor, glory, esteem, and distinction is paved for those whose accomplishments by their talents and by their *virtus* are recognized by their fellow citizens.⁵ Therefore, one can claim to possess *virtus*, but it remains insignificant, even invalid, until it is recognized by others. Thus, only recognized *virtus* leads to *gloria* and to *fama*. So, how did Roman elite with no military background validate their *virtus*?

Through semantic borrowing of the Greek virtue *ἀρετή*, or moral excellence, the elite non-militarists of the 1st century redefined the ways in which *virtus* could be legitimately obtained; and they expanded the semantic scope of the term, introducing “righteousness” and “human integrity” as tributary definitions. In the late Republic, both paths to *virtus* were recognized and validated by others, one through martial valor, and the other through moral rectitude, one through proving one’s virility on the battlefield, and the other through proving one’s virility by acting with prudence and decorum. Sallust makes this distinction transparent in *Bellum Catilinae*, in which he juxtaposes Caesar’s *virtus*, obtained through warfare, with the optimate Cato the Younger’s *virtus*, obtained through moral character. He states that, “within my own memory, there were only two men of the greatest *virtus*, although opposite in their practices, M. Cato and C. Caesar, concerning whom, since the matter is at hand, and, as it is not my intention to remain silent, I will describe, so much as I can, the nature and character of each man separately.”⁶ Sallust continues to recount the disposition of Cato as a man of sound righteousness, sobriety, self-control, sternness, and propriety, a man who did not vie for riches, nor for any one faction, but with severe probity, with modest temperance, and with abstinence and integrity – the calculated

⁴ Publil. Syr. 304: *iacet omnis virtus, fama nisi late patet*. Cf. also Sarsila, 2006, 84.

⁵ Cic. *Sest.* 136-7.

⁶ Sall. *Bell. Cat.* 53: *Sed memoria mea ingenti virtute, divorsis moribus fuere viri duo, M. Cato et C. Caesar; quos quoniam res obtulerat, silentio praeterire non fuit consilium, quin utriusque naturam et mores, quantum ingenio possum, aperirem*. Cf. also Eisenhut 1973, 52.

qualities of being a man through *virtus* as moral excellence.⁷ Through his moral exceptionalism, the *virtus* of Cato was recognized and validated, leading him down one of two paths toward *gloria* and *fama*.

That Caesar opted to take the more traditional path toward fame and glory through martial valor is substantiated by Sallust's analysis on Caesar's martial characterization of *virtus*, in which he states that, "Ultimately, Caesar endorsed hard work and vigilance. He was attentive to the affairs of his friends at the neglect of his own affairs. He refused nothing that was worthy of being given. And he longed for supreme power for his own army, and for a new war, in which his martial valor (*virtus*) could shine."⁸ Even as *virtus* as moral excellence became a welcome virtue among the elite Roman male citizens who had little or no military background, Caesar was well aware that immortality lie not in the direction of moral character, but in the direction of martial supremacy – a path taken by his renowned martial predecessors and founders of cults of Virtus, including Marcellus, Marius, and Pompey. According to both Livy and Cicero, military power was the original qualifier of *virtus*, which was acknowledged not only by the political elite, but also by a greater audience: the people of Rome. In order for the public to become aware of the *virtus* of the *imperatores*, i.e. the martial exploits of the commanding generals, *virtus* was publicly documented through visual media, namely through inscriptions, panel-painting, historical reliefs, coins, and spectacles, such as triumphs, by which the people of Rome could acknowledge and approve of their martial credibility.⁹ After all, *virtus* as martial valor always carried a visual image since the time of Marcellus. *Virtus* as moral excellence, on the other hand, possesses no visual representation. The Greek equivalent to *virtus* as moral excellence is *ἀρετή*, which did have an image, but was never adopted by the Romans who claimed *virtus* as moral excellence. Nor did any philosophers, writers, and orators who claimed *virtus* as moral

⁷ Sall. *Bell. Cat.* 54.

⁸ Sall. *Bell. Cat.* 54: *Postremo Caesar in animum induxerat laborare, vigilare; negotiis amicorum intentus sua neglegere, nihil denegare quod dono dignum esset; sibi magnum imperium, exercitum, bellum novum exoptabat, ubi virtus enitescere posset.* For Caesar's *imperium maius*, see Dio 43.14.1.4. Cf. also Ehrenberg, V. 1953. *Imperium Maius in the Roman Republic.* *AJP*, Vol. 74, No. 2, pp. 113-136.

⁹ Livy (9.6) asserts that the character of *virtus* was *multo bellicosius*, or "much more militaristic;" Cicero (*Philippics* 4.5) asserts that *virtus* was an indigenous characteristic that was, from the earliest time in the Republic, deeply embedded in the Roman military, by which the Romans conquered their enemies.

excellence ever try to reproduce the Marcellan image of Dea Virtus, likely because she is purely martial in form. Conversely, the Greek equivalent of *virtus* as martial valor, *ἀνδρεία*, had no Greek image until the late-1st century BCE, in which she takes the form of a martial goddess, undoubtedly influenced by Roman images of Virtus. And during the imperial period, the Greek goddess Andreia fully assimilated into the appearance of Dea Virtus.¹⁰

Therefore, *virtus* as martial valor was conceived as a visually imperative emblem for the people of Rome, who were personally affected by the *virtus* of the commanding generals and of their legions of Rome, as the preservation of Rome's citizen body depended on it.¹¹ The Roman people needed a champion – a military leader who could secure the borders of the *patria*. And Caesar knew that a champion who both merited martial *virtus*, and also had the credibility of his martial *virtus* validated by the people of Rome, would receive his universal fame among the stars.

In fact, just before Caesar rose to power, *virtus* as military excellence was already being translated into Greek as *andreia* on Roman military inscriptions rather than as *aretē*. A marble column from the Temple of Diana Nemorensis at Nemi bears a bilingual inscription that honors Gaius Salluvius Naso in 74/3 during the Mithridaitic Wars and translates *virtus*, not as *aretē*, but as *andreia*: “To Gaius Salluvius Naso, son of Gaius, legate and propraetor, from the Mysian Abbaitae and the Mysian Epictetes, because he rescued them in the war against Mithridates on account of his martial valor (*VIRTVTIS*; *ΑΝΔΡΗΑΣ*).¹² Therefore, even the Greeks of the 1st century BCE were aware of the distinction between Roman *virtus* as

¹⁰ See discussion of the goddess Aretē and Andreia below.

¹¹ Cf. for example Sall. *Bell. Cat.* 53.1.

¹² CIL 1.743 = ILS 37 = OGIS 445 = IGRR 1.401: C SALLVIO C F NASONI LEG PRO PR / MYSEI ABBAITAE ET EPICTETES QVOD EOS BELLO MITHRIDATIS CONSERVAVIT VIRTVTIS ERGO: ΓΑΙΩ ΣΑΛΛΟΥΙΩΙ ΓΑΙΟΥ ΥΙΩΙ ΝΑΣΩΝΙ ΠΡΕΣΒΕΥΤΗ ΚΑΙ ΑΝΤΙΣΤΡΑΤΗΓΩΙ ΜΥΣΟΙ ΑΒΒΑΙΕΤΑΙ ΚΑΙ ΕΠΙΚΤΗΤΕΙΣ ΟΤΙ ΑΥΤΟΥΣ ΕΝ ΤΩΙ ΠΟΛΕΜΩ ΤΩΙ ΜΙΘΡΙΔΑΤΟΥΣ ΔΙΕΤΗΡΗΖΕΝ ΑΝΔΡΗΑΣ ΕΝΕΚΕΝ. Cf. also Cecere, M.G.G. 2000. *Contributo dell'epigrafia per la storia del santuario nemorense*, in J.R. Brandt, A.M.L. Touati, Zahle (eds.). *Nemi – Status Quo: Recent Research at Nemi and the Sanctuary of Diana*. L'Erma di Bretschneider, Roma, pp. 35-44; Sherk, R.K. 1984. *Rome and the Greek East to the Death of Augustus*. Cambridge, pg. 84.

a military virtue and *virtus* as a virtue of moral character, modified by Cicero, the Stoics, and high-ranking, non-military men who lacked *virtus*.

Cicero, however, does distinguish between the two main semantic uses of *virtus*, namely between military *virtus*, and *virtus* as an intellectual characteristic, albeit exemplifying Pompey, and not Caesar.¹³ Throughout a speech delivered to the senate in support of conferring command on Pompey against Mithridates in 66, Cicero exhaustively praises the *virtus* of Pompey. However, at one point, Cicero makes a stark distinction between *virtus* as martial valor, and *virtus* as a general value of conscious excellence, or rather “excellences.” Cicero states that, “In this war against that Asiatic ruler, not only is that martial valor (*virtus militaris*), which Gaius Pompey holds above all, needed, but also all of those other great and numerous virtues of the mind (*virtutes animi*). Thus, it is difficult for our *imperator* to be engaged in Asia, Cilicia, Syria, and the kingdoms of the interior nations thinking on nothing else except on his enemy and on his renown.”¹⁴ That Cicero distinguishes between two legitimate classifications of *virtus* is necessary in order for us to clearly understand how *virtus* was distributed among those who have acquired *virtus militaris* through their martial aptitude like the Marcellus, Marius, Pompey, and Caesar, and those who have acquired some other quality of *virtus animi*, of which there were numerous possibilities. Cicero uses the multifarious plural form of *virtus*, i.e. *virtutes*, as a comprehensive term for the constellation of superior qualities a person could possess, especially among the political elite.¹⁵ However, the distinction is clear; according to Cicero’s taxonomy, there was *virtus militaris*, and there were *virtutes animi*. The former was a coveted characteristic among the military, and especially among the generals of Rome in pursuit of honor, glory, and renown, just as Cicero remarks of Pompey above. The latter was a coveted

¹³ For a discussion on *virtus* as *aretē* in Cicero, cf. Eisenhut 1973, 57, although, as a caveat, Eisenhut never fully understands the reality of *virtus* as martial valor in Cicero concerning military affairs.

¹⁴ Cic. *Manil.* 64: *Atque in hoc bello Asiatico et regio non solum militaris illa virtus, quae est in Cn. Pompeio singularis, sed aliae quoque virtutes animi magnae et multae requiruntur. Difficile est in Asia, Cilicia, Syria regnisque interiorum nationum ita versari nostrum imperatorem, ut nihil aliud nisi de hoste ac de laude cogitet.* At 48, Cicero also praises the *virtus* of Fabius Maximus, Marcellus the Great, Scipio, and Marius.

¹⁵ Cf. Eisenhut (1973, 64-71) for a discussion on the significance of the plural usage of *virtus*.

characteristic among the non-militarists, who desired the same honor and renown that *virtus* bestows, but could never achieve the same respect, glory, and admiration as the *imperatores* of the military. It was only they who possessed *virtus militaris* that was recognized by the general public, with whom the credibility of a general's *virtus* lay.

In a comparable passage, Cicero reveals that, when he wishes to speak about *virtus* as martial valor, in conjunction with *virtus* as myriad qualities, he is forced to qualify the terms in order to disambiguate their differences in meaning. In the same speech, Cicero again lauds the *virtus* of Pompey and states, “The martial valor of the *imperator* (*virtus imperatoris*) is both divine (*divina*) and incredible. As for his other [*virtutes*], of which I began to commemorate a little, how great and how many there are! For, as the most perfect *imperator* as he is, we should not inquire about his martial valor (*bellandi virtus*; literally “*virtus* with which to wage war”) alone; for, there are also many other estimable types of *virtus* that are supporters and companions of [*bellandi virtus*].”¹⁶ Subsequently, Cicero enumerates the “companions” of martial *virtus*, or *virtutes*, among them: integrity (*innocentia*), moderation (*temperantia*), trust (*fides*), facility (*facilitas*), talent (*ingenium*), and compassion (*humanitas*), all of which seem to have been classified by Cicero as characteristics of moral excellence, akin to the Greek ἀρετή. They can be considered the *virtutes animi*, not to be confused with the *virtus imperatoris*, which, according to Cicero, denotes the singular martial valor of the *imperator*, with which to wage war. In accordance with the moral characteristics which Pompey possesses as “companions” to his martial *virtus*, Cicero, moreover, professes that the ideal general of Rome should also possess requisite military characteristics, the martial type of *virtus* naturally among them. Just after Cicero praises Pompey for his *virtus*, by which he has surpassed all men both alive and of the past in glory, Cicero states: “For I believe that the ideal *imperator* ought to intrinsically possess four things: luck, authority, the knowledge of military affairs, and martial

¹⁶ Cic. *Manil.* 36: *Est haec divina atque incredibilis virtus imperatoris. Quid? ceterae, quas paulo ante commemorare coeperam, quantae atque quam multae sunt! Non enim bellandi virtus solum in summo ac perfecto imperatore quaerenda est, sed multae sunt artes eximiae huius administratae comitesque virtutis.*

prowess (*virtutem*).¹⁷ Cicero delivered *Pro Lege Manilia* in 66, the year before Caesar even held his first office as aedile.¹⁸ Yet, only ten years later, Cicero delivered a comparable speech to the senate on behalf of Caesar in an effort to extend his *imperium* in Gaul. In *de Provinciis Consularibus*, Cicero similarly praises the *virtus* of Caesar as he once did of Pompey. He extols the virtues of Caesar and proclaims: “Therefore, let Gaul remain under [Caesar’s] tutelage, whose trust, luck, and martial valor (*virtuti*) are to be endorsed.”¹⁹ Cicero deliberates on the success in Gaul enjoyed by Caesar, by whose *virtus* the Gauls were conquered, and by whose *virtus*, fame and glory ultimately contributed to his apotheosis.²⁰

As Marius’ martial successor, who inherited his uncle’s *ambitio* of political and martial supremacy, Caesar was doubtless conscious of the fact that there was no surer way to attain superiority in fame and in glory than through *virtus*, which hinged on the instigation and resolution of a great war against Rome’s enemies. With the threat of the Gauls and Germans looming at Rome’s doorstep, Caesar recognized that the most conducive way to acquire *virtus* was through the subjugation of Rome’s barbarian enemies, whose collective *virtus* needed to be yoked, lest it strengthen to the point at which the Romans might not be able to arrest their attempts to destroy Rome. According to Sallust, not only had the Romans lost the war in eloquence (*facundia*) to the Greeks, but they were also losing the war in “martial glory” (*gloria belli*) to the Gauls.²¹ It was this kind of generalized Roman attitude about the Gauls that made these barbarians so alluring as formidable foes of Rome, who, skulking at the boundaries of Roman territory for hundreds of years, constantly threatened not only the lives of the Romans, but also Rome’s cultural and military primacy. And it was this kind of popular rhetoric concerning the Gauls, whether genuine or hyperbolic, that necessitated their elimination as a viable threat to the existence of Rome. Their military

¹⁷ Cic. *Manil.* 28: *Ego enim sic existimo, in summo imperatore quattuor has res inesse oportere, scientiam rei militaris, virtutem, auctoritatem, felicitatem.* Cicero repeats these same four virtues this time regarding Pompey specifically at 49.

¹⁸ For his aedileship, cf. Plut. *Caes.* 5.

¹⁹ Cic. *Prov. Consul.* 35: *Quare sit in eius tutela Gallia, cuius fidei, virtuti, felicitati commendata est.*

²⁰ Cic. *Prov. Consul.* 35.

²¹ Sall. *Bell. Cat.* 53.3.

might undermined the military might of the Romans. And, as we will see, Caesar implies that, should the Romans divest the *virtus* of the barbarians, then the *virtus* of not only the soldiers, but also of their military commander would be elevated. In essence, Caesar understood that barbarian *virtus* needed to be subjugated by the Romans, as it would, then, become the property of not only Caesar, but all of Rome, analogous to the way in which *spolia* were appropriated from the enemy. Should he be victorious in a war against the Germans and the Gauls, Caesar knew that it would, then, be appropriate to publicize his martial accomplishments achieved by his *virtus* in order for his glory to manifest itself through public recognition. Therefore, just as Marcellus and Marius had their Temples of Honos and Virtus that permanently attested to their reputations in *honos* and *virtus*, Caesar, too, ascertained that his *virtus* would be memorialized. However, in lieu of eclipsing the political and martial legacies of Marcellus and Marius, whom he greatly revered, by building a new temple to Virtus or by appropriating an existing temple, Caesar opted to publicly document his *virtus* by publishing his prosaic *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* – his personal manifesto on the war he needed to let his *virtus* shine.²²

II.II: Caesar's Application of *Virtus* to His Enemies

In his commentaries, Caesar never claims *virtus* of any sort for himself, which, in and of itself, is a deliberate political statement about his own *virtus*.²³ Knowing that his success in warfare against the Gauls will speak for itself concerning his martial aptitude, Caesar turned his readers' attention rather toward the *virtus* of the Gauls and of his own soldiers.²⁴ Believing that his soldiers' *virtus* was a reflection of his own, Caesar had no need to claim *virtus* for himself, only to propagate his own military's reputation in martial prowess. Moreover, he extolled the *virtus* of his enemies in order to bolster the amazement of his

²² Books I-IV were written in 58-7 to 55-4, Books 5-7 in 53-52 to 52-51, cf. Wiseman 1998, 1-10.

²³ Caesar does, however, mention his *virtus*, or rather his lack of *virtus*, just once at *Gall.* 1.13, see discussion below. That Caesar avoids attributing *virtus* to himself for political reasons, cf. McDonnell 2006, 311-2; See also 300-19 and Sarsila, 2006, 101-10 for discussion on the relatively consistent meaning of *virtus* as martial valor, with few exceptions, in Caesar's *Commentarii*; and cf. Eisenhut's (1973, 44-6) surprisingly short section on the use of *virtus* by Caesar; also, Riggsby 2006, 83-96.

²⁴ Rawlings (1998, 188, no. 30) has calculated that *virtus* is used 71 times by Caesar in Books One through Seven, attributing it to the Gauls 31 times, to the Germans five times. According to McDonnell (2006, 302, no. 28), *virtus* is applied to his own soldiers 28 times.

victories, generating public recognition of his *virtus* and, subsequently, generating greater martial glory. By pitching the *virtus* of the Romans against the *virtus* of the Gauls, Caesar has made it evident that every engagement on the battlefield was considered to be a decisive contest in *virtus*, in which the *virtus* of one side eventually conquered the *virtus* of the other.²⁵ Moreover, by valorizing the *virtus* of his soldiers and not his own, Caesar's self-restraint, humility, and temperance precluded the possibility that he would be identified with hubris and condescension, which would have provoked contempt among the senators, who feared autocracy.²⁶ However, by refraining from self-adulation, and by publicly praising his armies with a distinction in *virtus*, Caesar allowed the public to construct his self-image for him, recognizing his inherent martial genius, and concluding that he was, indeed, a man of *virtus*. His *imperium* would, nevertheless, be his, bequeathed by the people of Rome, who ultimately approved of his military command, just as Sallust stated. Therefore, Caesar's credibility in *virtus* was acknowledged by the Roman people, thereby becoming worthy of the people's attention and respect, guiding him toward superiority in fame and glory. This is made clear in Caesar's exploitation of *virtus* in his *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* and in his *de Bello Civile*, as well as in *de Bello Africo*, *de Bello Alexandrino*, and *de Bello Hispaniensi*.

At the very beginning of *de Bello Gallico*, Caesar immediately emphasizes the fortitude of the Belgae, who, of all the tribes inhabiting Gaul, he considered the mightiest, due to their furthestmost location from civilization, which rendered them the most barbaric.²⁷ Just a few lines later, Caesar underscores the martial valor of the Helvetii, who "excel the rest of the Gauls in *virtus*, because they contend with the Germans almost daily in battle, either deflecting them back to the borders, or waging a war with them in their own territory."²⁸ That Caesar compares the barbarous tribes, and ranks them in

²⁵ For the original idea of contests in *virtus*, which I applied to Marcus Claudius Marcellus in Chapter One, and will apply to imperial art in Chapter III, I credit Rawlings (1998), who observed the appropriation of *virtus* during Caesar's Gallic Wars, and also McDonnell, who examined Caesar's contests in *virtus*, cf. 2006, 303.

²⁶ Dio 44.3.

²⁷ Caes. *Gall.* 1.1.

²⁸ Caes. *Bell. Gall.* 1.1: *...Helvetii quoque reliquos Gallos virtute praecedunt, quod fere quotidianis proeliis cum Germanis contendunt, cum aut suis finibus eos prohibent, aut ipsi in eorum finibus bellum gerunt.* Not only were Gallic tribes often

standing according to their *virtus* is significant.²⁹ Caesar estimates the level of strength and difficulty they posed on the battlefield, positioning the Helvetii at the apex of his socially-constructed hierarchy of *virtus* among Gallic nations due to their consistency in waging wars against the Germans, thereby maximizing their martial proficiency in battle, and maximizing their *virtus*. Moreover, although the barbarian tribes may not have perceived their battles with neighboring tribes as contests in *virtus*, Caesar did. And since, so far, the Helvetii rank the highest in *virtus*, they pose the most danger to the Romans, and, consequently, have the greatest opportunity in acquiring martial glory through victory.

In the next section, Caesar recapitulates that the king of the Helvetii persuaded his people to collectively march out of their native land, and to secure the sovereignty of all of Gaul, namely because they “excelled all others in *virtus*.”³⁰ Furthermore, Caesar explicates that the Helvetii learned from their parents and from their ancestors how to contend with *virtus*, rather than relying on deceit or treachery.³¹ That Caesar comments on their ancestral tradition in which the Helvetii learned how to fight by their *virtus* from their forefathers is remarkably analogous to the way in which the Romans often reflected on the martial valiance of their own forefathers, lauding their *virtus*, and urging one another to operate with the same martial ethos in *virtus*.³² The *virtus* of the Romans ran deep into the roots of the early Republic; and by claiming that the *virtus* of the Helvetii ran just as deep, having been passed down from generations, Caesar elevates the *virtus* of the Helvetii to a level of *virtus* near to the Romans’, thereby creating a semblance of a worthy contest in *virtus*.³³ Even as Caesar premises the cause of his Gallic War by using the Helvetii as a catalyst for his initial launch of his military campaign, he nevertheless emphasizes the

considered superior to the enemies in *virtus*, but also tribes of other nations, for example, in *de Bello Alexandrino*, the Vatiniani, enemies of Caesar, demonstrated superior martial valor (*virtute*) during sea-battle, cf. *Caes. Alex.* 46.

²⁹ Cf. Riggsby (2006, 83-4), who has also noted “a hierarchy of strength in war” established by Caesar.

³⁰ *Caes. Gall.* 1.2.

³¹ *Caes. Gall.* 1.13. Cf. also Riggsby 2006, 84.

³² For example, *Cic. Philippics*, 4.5; *Sall. Jug.* 85.17-18, 85.21, 86.29-39.

³³ Cf. *Cic. Phil.* 4.5 above.

martial valor of the Helvetii to amplify the magnitude of the *virtus* of his legions, and, thereby his own *virtus*, making their impending victory over the Helvetii much worthier of the public's attention.³⁴

Not only was the *virtus* of the Gauls a considerable concern to Caesar, but so was the *virtus* of the Germans. He stresses the *virtus* of the Germans, which was menacing to both the Gauls and the Romans, stating that "he [Caesar] would come to learn what the invincible Germans (*invicti Germani*), highly trained in weaponry, who have never slept under a roof in fourteen years, could do with their martial valor (*virtute*)."³⁵ A few lines later, he reiterates that the Germans possessed unbelievable martial valor (*incredibili virtute*), as well as great skill in arms.³⁶ The use of the adjective *invicti* appended to the Germans, in conjunction with a reference to their exceptional *virtus*, is particularly germane to Caesar, who magnifies the martial capacity of the Germans in an attempt to also magnify the potential in *virtus* to be gained from a decisive victory against the Germans in battle in an effort to amplify his own reputation among the people of Rome.

Later, Caesar, although consistent in attributing *virtus* to the Gauls, juxtaposes the *virtus* of the Gauls with the greater *virtus* of the Germans.³⁷ He states that, "There was once a time when the Gauls were superior in martial valor (*virtute*) to the Germans, and waged wars with them, and due to the multitude of their population and their lack of fertile lands, they sent colonies over the Rhine [into Germania] But now, since they endure the same dearth, poverty, and hardships as the Germans, they have adopted the same way of life and bodily training. However, the proximity of our own provinces, as well as the transport of overseas goods have generated a great acquaintance with goods for use and abundance, and little by little, they have become accustomed to defeat, and having been conquered in a

³⁴ Caesar also comments on the remarkable *virtus* of the Boii (1.28), the unique reputation in *virtus* of the *Treveri* tribe (2.24), the envied *virtus* of the *Aduatuci* by their neighbors (2.31), the greatest reputation in *virtus* of the *Bellovaci* (2.15, 7.59),

³⁵ *Caes. Gall.* 1.36: *...intellecturum, quid invicti Germani, exercitatissimi in armis, qui inter annos xiiii tectum non subissent, virtute possent.* Cf. also Riggsby 2006, 85.

³⁶ *Caes. Gall.* 1.39.

³⁷ Caesar remarks on the superiority of Gallic *virtus* before their subordination at 5.54.

multitude of battles, and they do not even compare [to the Germans] in martial valor (*virtute*).³⁸ Here, again, Caesar insists that the *virtus* of the Germans be recorded so that the worth of their eventual defeat will contribute to his own reputation among the people.

Just as Caesar compares the *virtus* of the Gauls with the *virtus* of the Germans, he also systematically measures the *virtus* of the Gauls against the *virtus* of the Romans, often implying that the *virtus* of the Romans is only slightly greater than that of the Gauls, so as to give the impression that the *virtus* of the Romans was profoundly challenged by the *virtus* of the Gauls.³⁹ That is to say, a rigorously challenging battle, embellished or not, is more impressive than an effortless battle, thus ensuring esteem for the victorious Roman soldiers. There are also instances in which Caesar fearfully hesitates to engage in battle with certain Gallic tribes due to their high standing in *virtus*. In Book II, prior to battle against the Belgae at Bibrax in 57, Caesar remarks that, “At first, Caesar decided to hold off on a pitched battle [with the Belgae] on account of the multitude of the enemy, and on account of their extraordinary reputation in martial valor (*opinionem virtutis*). However, during daily equestrian combat, he tested the martial valor (*virtute*) of the enemy, and their daring of our own men. Then, realizing that our men were not inferior, he selected a naturally opportune location suitable to pitch a battle in front of the camp.”⁴⁰ Caesar seems to entertain the possibility of defeat, even after the fact that he was victorious, again, in order to inflate the glory gained in waging war against the fierce Belgae, whose standing in *virtus* rivaled the *virtus* of the Romans.

³⁸ Caes. Gall. 6.24: *Ac fuit antea tempus, cum Germanos Galli virtute superarent, ultro bella inferrent, propter hominum multitudinem atque inopiam trans Rhenum colonias mitterent... Nunc quod in eadem inopia, egestate, patientia qua Germani permanent, eodem victu et cultu corporis utuntur; Gallis autem provinciarum propinquitas et transmarinarum rerum notitia multa ad copiam atque usum largitur, paulatim adsuefacti superari multisque victi proeliis ne se quidem ipsi cum illis virtute comparant.*

³⁹ The *virtus* of the Romans is compared to the *virtus* of the enemies in the other commentaries, cf. *Alex.* 16, *Civ.* 1.57, 2.6, 2.16.

⁴⁰ Caes. Gall. 2.8: *Caesar primo et propter multitudinem hostium et propter eximiam opinionem virtutis proelio supersedere statuit: cotidie tamen equestribus proeliis, quid hostis virtute posset et quid nostri auderent, periclitabatur. Vbi nostros non esse inferiores intellexit, loco pro castris ad aciem instruendam natura opportuno atque idoneo....*

Similarly, the *virtus* of the Nervii drew the attention of Caesar on account of their near victory over the Romans. During the Battle of the Sabis in 57, Caesar and his forces were ambushed by the Nervii, who, by their *virtus*, nearly decimated Caesar's army; however, once again, the *virtus* of the Romans prevailed over the *virtus* of the Nervii. By his steadfast tactics, he was able to turn the tide in favor of the Romans. Nevertheless, as the Nervii began to fall, Caesar repeatedly ascribes *virtus* to them, whose martial valor left an indelible impression on him. He states that, "The enemy, even as their hope for safety has reached its end, they, nevertheless, persisted in their martial valor (*virtutem*)."⁴¹ Needless to say, even though the Gauls possessed tremendous martial valor, Caesar often positioned the *virtus* of his own soldiers on an insurmountable plain, which no Gallic army could reach, no matter how great their reputation in *virtus*.

There are two instances, however, that demonstrate that the enemies are occasionally equal to the Romans in *virtus* (one in *de Bello Gallico*, and the other in *de Bello Hispaniensi*), which not only added to the depth of suspense during Caesar's victorious campaigns, but also corroborates Caesar's martial ideology by which the *virtus* of one side was pitched against the *virtus* of the other. In *de Bello Hispaniensi*, during the Battle of Munda against Pompey in 45, the author states, "Thus, even though our [Caesar's] men excel in martial valor (*virtute*), our adversaries, from their higher position, fiercely defend themselves, and so vehement was the shouting from both sides, as well as the volley of spears, that our men nearly lost their confidence in victory. For, in regards to attacking and shouting, which were the greatest methods of terrorizing the enemies, we were on equal terms in battle. And from both of these types of combat methods, even though they came to battle with "equal martial valor" (*parem virtutem*), the multitude of enemies was pierced by our volley of spears in heaps and fell to their deaths."⁴² That

⁴¹ Caes. Gall. 2.27: *At hostes etiam in extrema spe salutis tantam virtutem praestiterunt.*

⁴² Caes. Hisp. 31: *Hic etsi virtute nostri antecedeabant, adversarii loco superiore se defendebant acerrime, et vehemens fiebat ab utrisque clamor telorumque missu concursus, sic ut prope nostri diffiderent victoriae. Congressus enim et clamor, quibus rebus maxime hostis conterretur, in collatu pari erat condicione. Ita ex utroque genere pugnae cum parem virtutem ad bellandum contulissent, pilorum missu fixa cumulat et concidit adversariorum multitudo.*

Caesar considered the *virtus* of Pompey's legions to be on equal footing with the *virtus* of Caesar's own legions is transparent. Because these particular enemies of Caesar also happened to be Romans themselves, they received an equal status in *virtus*, whereas the barbarians never received equal treatment in *virtus*, with one exception.⁴³

In Book V of *de Bello Gallico*, while holding council at Samarobriva (Amiens), Caesar reluctantly spread his legions over Gaul due to a severe draught and a shortage in the food supply, sending the Eighth Legion to the tribes of the Eburones, ruled by Ambiorix and Catuvolcus. Ambiorix, having offered the Romans safe passage to travel through a narrow ravine across the territory of the Eburones, betrayed the Romans and ambushed them in co-operation with several other Gallic tribes. Whilst the battle ensued, Caesar affirms that, "The barbarians do not lack a plan. For, their leaders ordered a command across the entire battle line, namely that no one could leave their position, that any booty was theirs, and that whatever the Romans abandoned was reserved for them, hence they estimated that everything depended on a victory. These enemies of ours were our equals in martial valor and eagerness (*Erant et virtute et studio pugnandi pares*). Our soldiers, although abandoned by their leader and by their fortune, nevertheless, placed all hope of safety in their martial valor (*virtute*), and every time each cohort charged, a great number of enemies would fall to their deaths in that area."⁴⁴ In the following section, the Gauls have the Romans completely surrounded while pelting them relentlessly with projectiles; and Caesar affirms that, should his soldiers fail to hold their ground, "there would be no room left for *virtus*" (*nec virtuti locus relinquebatur*).⁴⁵ Caesar warns that, although the Romans managed to stand their ground, if they did attempt to flee, no martial valor could be accumulated, i.e. they would die without *virtus*,

⁴³ At 7.22, Caesar asserts that the *virtus* of his troops was unique, even though it was met (*occurrerant*) with all types of stratagems of the Gauls, who possessed remarkable ingenuity.

⁴⁴ *Caes. Gall.* 5.34: *At barbaris consilium non defuit. Nam duces eorum tota acie pronuntiare iusserunt, ne quis ab loco discederet: illorum esse praedam atque illis reservari quaecumque Romani reliquissent: proinde omnia in victoria posita existimarent. Erant et virtute et studio pugnandi pares; nostri, tametsi ab duce et a fortuna deserebantur, tamen omnem spem salutis in virtute ponebant, et quotiens quaeque cohors procurrerat, ab ea parte magnus numerus hostium cadebat.* For the barbarization of the enemies by Caesar, cf. Grillo 2012, 106-21.

⁴⁵ *Caes. Gall.* 5.35.

whereas the *virtus* of the Gauls, who did manage to achieve victory in this battle, elevated their *virtus* to the same level of *virtus* as that of the Romans. Just as Pompey's army was considered equal in *virtus* to the army of Caesar, so, too, was the *virtus* of the Eburones equal to the *virtus* of Caesar's army. Note that Caesar does not state that the *virtus* of the Gauls surpassed that of the Romans, but that they are only evenly matched, even as the Roman army was decimated. That Caesar deliberately omits the fact that the Gauls bested the Roman in *virtus* is deliberately contrived, lest the Gauls publicly appear to have outperformed the Romans in a virtue in which the Romans believed themselves to be unmatched. Their military hegemony depended on their superiority in *virtus* and Caesar could not admit defeat. Nonetheless, Caesar asserts that the soldiers of the Eighth Legion placed all hope of safety in their *virtus*, and charged on, killing many of the Gauls, eventually contributing to their marginally isolated victories on the battlefield, thanks to their martial valor. Even as the Romans were eventually annihilated, Caesar still found a silver lining in this decisive battle and capitalized on it by attempting to maximize his soldiers' *virtus* even as they died on the battlefield.

II.III: The Reflection of His Soldiers' *Virtus* on Caesar

Caesar praised the *virtus* of his soldiers during warfare with the Gauls because he believed that the reputation of his soldiers in *virtus* was a reflection of his own. In Book I, Caesar remarks that he prefers to march with the Tenth Legion not only because of their allegiance to him, but also because of their exemplary *virtus*. He states that, "Caesar has shown favor to this legion, and he has greatly confided in them on account of their martial valor (*virtutem*)."⁴⁶ A few lines later, Caesar expresses that he "placed his legates and his quaestors in command of a legion, so that each [commander] would have his own witnesses to his own *virtus*."⁴⁷ Regarding the latter statement, Caesar stresses the point of validation of

⁴⁶ Caes. Gall. 1.40: *Huic legioni Caesar et indulserat praecipue et propter virtutem confidebat maxime*. Caesar also praises the *virtus* of Legiones VII, VIII, and IX in 8.8.

⁴⁷ Caes. Gall. 1.52: *Caesar singulis legionibus singulos legatos et quaestorem praefecit, uti eos testes suae quisque virtutis haberet*. Cf. also Riggsby 2006, 91.

virtus by others, namely that his commanders of the legions ought to have their own witnesses to their actions of *virtus* on the battlefield, lest their *virtus* go unnoticed, and, therefore, dissipate – a pivotal point concerning the way in which Caesar characterizes *virtus* in his commentaries. Concerning the former statement, Caesar underscores the necessity for Roman generals to align themselves with the legion with the greatest potential in gaining *virtus*, since the *virtus* of the Roman soldiers was commensurate with Caesar's own *virtus*. The evidence is provided a few lines earlier, in which Caesar asserts that, "I remember when our forefathers had already put to trial the danger of that enemy [the Gauls], when the Cimbri and the Teutones were defeated by Gaius Marius, and the army seemed to deserve no less praise (*laudem*) than the *imperator* himself."⁴⁸ Caesar's statement also accords with the aforementioned maxim of Publilius Syrus, who affirms that the *virtus* of the soldiers depended on the military strategy of their general.⁴⁹ Therefore, it can be construed that the *virtus* of the soldiers reflected the *virtus* of their general and the *virtus* of the general reflected the *virtus* of the soldiers. After all, neither Marcellus, Marius, nor Caesar conquered their enemies by themselves. Victory was a concerted effort for Caesar, and he ensured that his troops, who deserved no less praise than the general himself, would receive their due credit in *virtus*.

II.IV: Contests in *Virtus*: *Virtus* Captured, Gained, and Defeated in Warfare

Caesar believed that *virtus* was a principal stake in battle that could be acquired and taken away. What rendered Caesar's victory over the Helvetii even more considerable is his recollection of the previous Roman incursion with the Helvetii, who, in 107, obliterated the Romans, subsequently divesting them of their *virtus*. Caesar states that when the Helvetii began to infiltrate the western territory beyond the Arar (Saône) River, he ambushed the Helvetii who remained on the east bank, putting many of them to the sword, and routing the rest to the surrounding woods, in an area which he calls *Tigurine* – one of the four

⁴⁸ Caes. Gall. 1.40: *Factum eius hostis periculum patrum nostrorum memoria, cum Cimbris et Teutonis a Gaio Mario pulsus non minorem laudem exercitus quam ipse imperator meritis videbatur.*

⁴⁹ Publil. Syr. 159.

cantons that comprised Helvetia. Caesar's minor victory over the Helvetii triggered his memory of the Roman massacre at Tigurine in 107 by the Helvetii, the reason for which he estimates that the Helvetii were superior in *virtus* to the rest of the Gallic tribes.⁵⁰ The Roman defeat may have provided Caesar stimulus to pursue a Gallic conquest, especially over the Helvetii as conquerors of Rome. It should be no surprise that Caesar deliberately omitted the fact that the Helvetii had once extinguished the *virtus* of the Romans by executing the Roman consular general Lucius Cassius, and by humiliating his Roman soldiers; however, his thirst for vengeance over the Helvetii is clearly indicative of the fact that Roman *virtus* had been embarrassingly lost. Therefore, not only did Caesar desire to reclaim the *virtus* taken from the Romans, similar to the way in which military standards were occasionally confiscated, but he also desired to claim that captured *virtus* for himself, the recovery of which would have hailed him a national hero.

This is not the first time that the *virtus* of the Romans had been taken from them. As mentioned above, Livy recounts that the Samnites decimated the Roman army and extinguished their *virtus* during the Battle of the Caudine Forks in 321.⁵¹ Similarly, in 216, Hannibal and the Carthaginians slaughtered the Roman army during the Battle of Cannae, consequently eviscerating the *virtus* of the Romans. However, in 214, Marcellus retaliated and extinguished (*extinctam*) the *virtus* of Hannibal during the Battle of Nola.⁵² Livy's use of *extinctam* concerning *virtus* again demonstrates that *virtus* could be defeated. Caesar's vengeful incursion against the Helvetii, who forced the Romans under the yoke, can be understood in light of the loss of *virtus* at Cannae, and the recovery of Roman *virtus* by Marcellus at Nola, namely that *virtus* could be captured in combat.

⁵⁰ Caes. *Bell. Gall.* 1.12: "As I reflect on our ancestors, this singular canton [Tigurine], when they had marched out of their homeland, slew the consul Lucius Cassius, and had his army pass under the yoke. Thus, whether by accident or by the will of the immortal gods, this part of the state of Helvetia that introduced such unforgettable catastrophe to the Roman people was the first to completely pay the penalty. Therefore, Caesar was able to avenge this personal and national injustice:" *Hic pagus unus, cum domo exisset, patrum nostrorum memoria, L. Cassium consulem interfecerat et eius exercitum sub iugum miserat. Ita sive casu sive consilio deorum immortalium, quae pars civitatis Helvetiae insignem calamitatem populo Romano intulerat, ea princeps poenas persolvit. Qua in re Caesar non solum publicas sed etiam privatas iniurias ultus est...*

⁵¹ Livy 9.6. See also section I.III.

⁵² Livy 23.45. See also section I.III.

Just as Livy conceived that *virtus* could be lost in battle, so, too, did Tacitus. Although writing in the 1st century CE, Tacitus reflects on the martial valor of the Gauls, who, he proclaims, “once flourished in warfare, but soon weakness and peace overtook them, and they lost (*amissa*) their *virtus* and their freedom.”⁵³ We can extrapolate from Tacitus that the Gauls, who once shone in battle through their martial valor, had, over time, become feeble, accepting their fate at the hands of Caesar, whose *virtus* conquered the *virtus* of the Gauls, taking Gaul and its *virtus* as his prize. Therefore, Tacitus clearly illustrates that the *virtus* of the Gauls was forfeited to the Romans after they were conquered.

More significantly, however, in the *Annals*, Tacitus employs the phrase *certamen virtutis* in the context of martial valor. In Book Fifteen, Tacitus recounts the Parthian War of 58-63 CE over the disputed territory of Armenia during the reign of Nero, which was the only major foreign campaign during his sovereignty of Rome. In the year 62, the Parthians, led by King Vologases, encountered the Roman legions at Rhandeia, led by the legate Lucius Caesennius Paetus, who had summoned the Roman general Gnaeus Domitius Corbulo and his forces in Syria for assistance. However, when Corbulo and his legions arrived at Rhandeia, Paetus had already capitulated to King Vologases, who made three demands: that the Romans surrender Armenia, abandoning all posts; that the Romans build a bridge for the Parthians over the Arsaias River over which Vologases could triumph in victory over the Romans; and that the Roman soldiers have to pass under the yoke – a humiliating visual spectacle that symbolized the defeat of the Romans and of their *virtus*.⁵⁴ As the Roman soldiers tried to restrain their tears, Tacitus states that, “the competition in martial valor (*certamen virtutis*) and the prospect of glory (*ambitio gloriae*) had dissipated (*decesserat*), affecting only more fortunate men [than the Romans]; and only pity remained for them,

⁵³ Tac. *Agri.* 11: *nam Gallos quoque in bellis floruisse accepimus; mox segnitia cum otio intravit, amissa virtute pariter ac libertate.*

⁵⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 15.14-6; Dio 62.21.

especially among the minor ranks of soldiers.”⁵⁵ Blood was never spilled at Rhandaia; however, that a battle was scheduled at Rhandaia is clear. This contest in *virtus*, or *certamen virtutis*, which presented a prospect of military glory for the Romans, was stifled by Paetus’ surrender. Tacitus articulates this ideological phenomenon in which Caesar often engages, namely that Roman battles were considered contests in *virtus*, in which *virtus* was the prize or *spolium*, which could be captured during Roman warfare.

In *de Bello Civili*, Caesar confirms that contests in *virtus* did take place on the battlefield. During the Battle of Illerda in 49 between Caesar and Pompey, Caesar’s army began to recoil, during which Caesar praised the *virtus* of the cavalry for putting their lives in danger whilst the army safely retreated. Rather than admit defeat, Caesar states, “Thus, the battle was fought as a contest (*certamine*) with mixed results.”⁵⁶ Although Caesar does not state that the contest was a contest in *virtus*, it is, nevertheless, implied, since the contest took place within the context of the *virtus* of the *equites*, whose *virtus*, pitched in battle against the Pompeians, allowed the army to escape. Nevertheless, Caesar’s *virtus* ultimately prevailed over the Pompeians, explicitly recorded in *de Bello Hispaniensi*. The author states that Tiberius Tullius, chief envoy on behalf of Pompey, surrendered the town of Ategua to Caesar, and directly addressed the *imperator*: “We, who have been left behind, abandoned by Pompey, and have been conquered by your martial valor (*superati tua virtute*), request and seek your clemency.”⁵⁷ We can better understand that Caesar himself considered the Battle of Illerda to be a contest in *virtus* from this passage in *de Bello Hispaniensi*, in which *virtus* is not only attributed to Caesar, but is also credited by the author as the characteristic that defeated Pompey, which led to Caesar’s superiority in *virtus*. Needless to say,

⁵⁵ Tac. Ann. 15.16: *Decesserat certamen virtutis et ambitio gloriae, feliciū hominū adfectus: sola misericordia valebat, et apud minores magis*. Besides the aforementioned Livy (10.23), the only other instance of *certamen virtutis* is found in Cicero (*de Fini*. 5.71), who holds disdain for competitions in *virtus*.

⁵⁶ Caes. Civ. 1.46: *Ita vario certamine pugnatum est*.

⁵⁷ Caes. Hisp. 17: *...relicti et deserti a Pompeio, tua virtute superati salutem a tua clementia deprecimur petimusque...* In the same speech, Tullius regrets not having been on the winning side, stating that his perseverance in martial valor (*constantiam virtutis*) would have been on display if he were a soldier of Caesar rather than Caesar’s scourge. Similar at 19, a former Pompeian named L. Munatius requests that Caesar spare his life in exchange for such *virtus* in support of Caesar as Munatius had once displayed in support of Pompey.

virtus was the operative martial quality in battle contests that is credited with not only conquering Rome's enemies, but it was also the objective of battle.⁵⁸

Moreover, in Book I of *de Bello Gallico*, while Caesar appraises the *virtus* of the Helvetii, as discussed above, he comments, in passing, on his own potential in *virtus*, and intimates that, for *virtus* to be earned, a contest in *virtus* must take place, in which both sides are knowingly engaging in battle. He recalls the previous encounter with the Tigurine canton of the Helvetii, whom he had ambushed unawares and easily defeated, stating that, "this very event does not greatly contribute to his [Caesar's] *virtus*, nor should he despise them [the Helvetii]."⁵⁹ The line is significant for two reasons. First, this is the only time in which Caesar ever alludes to his own *virtus*, or rather his missed opportunity for *virtus*. Second, Caesar suggests that the ambush on the Helvetii, while unaware that they were under attack, did not contribute to Caesar's *virtus*, namely because the other side, caught off-guard, could not properly defend themselves. Caesar indicates that *virtus* can only be accumulated when the enemies also displayed their *virtus* in battle. Therefore, since this was not a pitched battle, i.e. since this was not a contest in *virtus*, but rather an ambush, Caesar rejects the idea of accepting the *virtus* of the Helvetii since their *virtus* was never displayed in battle. Nevertheless, Caesar demonstrates that contributions of *virtus* to one's capacity in *virtus* can only be made in a fair pitched battle, and that *virtus* can only be captured when the enemies are able to demonstrate their own *virtus*. Otherwise, there is nothing to be proud of in a martial deed of deceit, which did not impress others.

More explicitly, Caesar employs, albeit only once, the phrase *certamen in virtute* in *de Bello Gallico*, thereby confirming that he conceived of war as a contest in *virtus*.⁶⁰ In Book III, during the Battle

⁵⁸ *Virtus* and pitched battles do not always defeat the enemy, according to Caesar, who, after a siege at Cenebun in 52, states that "neither by *virtus*, nor by pitched battles did the Romans conquer, but by stratagem, and by knowledge of siege tactics, about which the Gauls were ignorant:" *Non virtute neque in acie vicisse Romanos, sed artificio quodam et scientia oppugnationis, cuius rei fuerint ipsi imperiti.*

⁵⁹ *Caes. Gall.* 1.13: *...ne ob eam rem aut suae magnopere virtuti tribueret aut ipsos despiceret.*

⁶⁰ The phrase is repeated in *de Bello Alexandrino* 15. For defense of *virtus* here as a martial quality, cf. McDonnell 2006, 302. McDonnell (2006, 303, no. 29) also claims that *virtus* is lost at *Caes. Gall.* 2.27; however, what is lost is the disgrace of flight by

of Morhiban in 56 against the Gallic Veneti in the Bay of Biscay, Caesar's naval fleet, led by his legate Brutus Albinus, engaged in a sea-battle with 220 Venetian ships, much more than the Romans had originally mobilized. Alarmed that the Veneti had not only the numerical advantage, but also the sailing skills to succeed in battle, Brutus immediately devised a plan to use sharp hooks on the end of poles to muddle the Venetians' rigging. Grappled by the hooks, the lines of the Venetian ships snapped, and the masts tumbled onto their decks below, preventing further use of their ships, which resulted in a Roman victory over the Veneti. After Caesar witnessed the entire battle from the shore, he stated, "The rest of this contest was in martial valor (*certamen positum in virtute*), in which my soldiers were obviously superior, and even more so because the battle happened in the sight of Caesar and of the entire army, so that no deed even a little bolder could escape our notice; and, in fact, the army was positioned on all the hills and on higher ground from which there was a view upon the sea."⁶¹ Caesar's commentary on the superior *virtus* of his naval fleet over the Veneti corroborates two principal points. First, Caesar considered battles as contests in *virtus*, which contributed to his ranking system in *virtus*. Second, Caesar makes it transparent that, for *virtus* to be considered legitimate, it had to be recognized by someone else, which is consistent with the martial maxim of Publilius Syrus, who, again, states that, "all *virtus* lies dormant unless it is awakened by wide recognition."⁶² Nevertheless, the *virtus* of Caesar's naval fleet was validated by the recognition of both Caesar himself, and all of Caesar's infantrymen, who witnessed the naval victory of Brutus Albinus from above.⁶³

virtus, not *virtus* itself: "they [the Roman cavalrymen] obliterated their disgrace of flight by their martial valor" (*turpitudinem fugae virtute delebant*).

⁶¹ Caes. Gall. 3.14: *Reliquum erat certamen positum in virtute, qua nostri milites facile superabant, atque eo magis, quod in conspectu Caesaris atque omnis exercitus res gerebatur, ut nullum paulo fortius factum latere posset; omnes enim colles ac loca superiora, unde erat propinquus despectus in mare, ab exercitu tenebantur.*

⁶² Publil. Syr. 304: *iacet omnis virtus, fama nisi late patet.*

⁶³ Similarly, in *de Bello Alexandrino* (15), a sea-battle ensued between the Rhodians and Caesar and the Alexandrians, in which the author states that, "Then, it was necessary to retreat due to the narrow and confined space, and the entire contest depended on their martial valor (*certamen in virtute constitit*)": *Tum necessario discessum ab arte est propter angustias loci, atque omne certamen in virtute constitit.*

Contests in *virtus* not only took place during battles against Rome's enemies, but also between Roman individuals, who vied against each other for supremacy in *virtus* over one another, not dissimilar to the way in which the Roman political elite vied against each other for martial and political primacy. Sallust, during a discussion on Roman military service, states that, among recruits, "for such men, no labor was unfamiliar, no place was rough or steep, nor was any armed enemy alarming; martial valor conquered all (*virtus omnia domuerat*). But the greatest contest in glory was with one another; each man hastened to strike his enemy, to scale a wall, and to be observed while he carried out such a deed. They thought that these things were their riches, their good fame, and their great nobility. They had avarice for praise and wealth; and they wanted great glory and riches gained honorably."⁶⁴ Sallust's martial anecdote on Roman military recruits illuminates two things. First, his phrase *virtus omnia domuerat* demonstrates that *virtus* had the active potential to conquer in the context of military service. Second, he conceives that every martial deed performed by a soldier needs to be witnessed in order for his deed to be acknowledged and his glory validated. These deeds of *virtus*, over which every soldier was competing, was considered their currency for fame and glory, according to Sallust, whose statement is consistent with Caesar's conception of *virtus*-recognition and *virtus*-validation.

Moreover, that *virtus* could be surrendered is made explicit by Caesar. In Book II, as Caesar marched through Gaul, subjugating the Aedui, the Belgae, and the Ambiani, he entered into the territory of the Nervii, who displayed great *virtus*, and censured the other tribes of the Belgae, who, they claimed, lost their *virtus* when they surrendered to Rome. Caesar asserts that, "there was no access to them [the Nervii] for merchants, for they neither allowed in any wine, nor any other goods, because they believed that, with these items, their minds would languish and their *virtus* would recoil (*remitti*). They were fierce

⁶⁴ Sall. Cat. 7: *Igitur talibus viris non labor insolitus, non locus ullus asper aut arduus erat, non armatus hostis formidulosus; virtus omnia domuerat. Sed gloriae maximum certamen inter ipsos erat; se quisque hostem ferire, murum ascendere, conspici dum tale facinus faceret, properabat; eas divitias, eam bonam famam magnamque nobilitatem putabant. Laudis avidi, pecuniae liberales erant; gloriam ingentem, divitias honestas volebant.*

men and of great martial valor (*virtutis*); and, therefore, they disparaged and accused the other Belgae, who had submitted themselves to the Roman people, and yielded (*proiecissent*) their *virtus* which they had earned from their forefathers.”⁶⁵ First, Caesar states that, since the Nervii value their *virtus* as fierce warriors, they reject the importation of any goods that possessed the potential to render a man feeble in mind, which might diminish his martial valor. Second, the Nervii claimed that, once the rest of the tribes of the Belgae capitulated to Rome, they surrendered their *virtus* to the Roman people. Caesar has demonstrated a significant point in our understanding of the function of *virtus* during Roman warfare. When the enemy surrendered to the people of Rome, they also surrendered their *virtus*, abandoning their martial reputation and their freedom. That is to say, when an enemy submits to the Romans during battle, a transaction in *virtus* occurs, in which the *virtus* of the enemy is transferred to the Romans.

Accordingly, Caesar also describes the ramifications of losing *virtus*, the consequences of which could be catastrophic to a nation. In Book I, while holding council with the Aedui, Diviciacus, who spoke on behalf of his people, explained to Caesar that there are two main factions in Gaul: the Aedui, and the Arverni. According to Diviciacus, for many years, there was a vehement competition over the sovereignty of Gaul, during which the Arverni and the Sequani hired the Germans as mercenaries to aid in the war against the Aedui. 15,000 Germans crossed the Rhine, after which they found the fecund farmlands, the civilization, and the wealth of the Gauls gratifying. Subsequently, a barrage of Germans inundated Gallic territory, culminating in a population of roughly 120,000 Germans in Gaul. Consequently, the Aedui, whose martial valor (*virtute*) was once superior in Gaul, had been crushed during unrelenting combat with the Germans, who brought the Aedui great disaster, including the loss of their *equites*, the loss of their nobility, and the loss of their governing senate, according to Diviciacus.⁶⁶ Caesar’s council with Diviciacus

⁶⁵ Caes. Gall. 2.15: *nullum aditum esse ad eos mercatoribus; nihil pati vini reliquarumque rerum inferri, quod eis rebus relanguescere animos eorum et remitti virtutem existimarent: esse homines feros magnaeque virtutis: increpitare atque incusare reliquos Belgas, qui se populo Romano dedidissent patriamque virtutem proiecissent; confirmare sese neque legatos missuros neque ullam condicionem pacis accepturos.*

⁶⁶ Caes. Gall. 1.31.

reveals the stakes involved during warfare in Gaul, in which the *virtus* of one nation, even if once superior over all other tribes, could be abolished and replaced by the *virtus* of another, resulting in a loss of their comprehensive military capability and in the destabilization of Aeduan society and government. The consequences from a loss in *virtus* could be disastrous to any civilization. This is why the Romans, from Marcellus, to Marius, to Caesar, seriously considered the Gauls a tangible threat to Roman hegemony, as they had the potential to destabilize the *res publica*. For this reason, it was imperative that Caesar consider all battles as contests in *virtus*. The loss of *virtus* could not only undermine the pillars of Roman government – the *cursus honorum* – which could potentially weaken Caesar’s current political positions, as well as his future political endeavors, but it could also place the safety of Rome within a path of peril.

II.V: Safety, Security, and Peace Depended on Virtus

That the safety and security of Rome depended on the *virtus* of the Roman army and its commanding general is a paramount function of *virtus*, according to Caesar. In *de Bello Gallico*, Caesar makes it a point to stress (at least five times) that *salus* was contingent upon *virtus*. In Book II, during a skirmish with the Aduatuci, the Romans besieged their oppidum and took control of the town. However, during the night, the Aduatuci unveiled a secret cache of weapons and makeshift shields, with which they devised a plan to covertly waylay the Romans. Caesar elucidates that the safety of the Aduatuci was threatened by the occupation of the Romans, hence their reason for their covert operation. He states that, “the attack from the enemies was fierce, as they were strong men in desperate hope of safety, positioned on uneven ground against those who launch spears at them from the rampart and towers, since their hope of safety lie in their *virtus* alone” (*cum in una virtute omnis spes salutis consisteret*).⁶⁷ Similarly, in Book III, Caesar stationed the legate Servius Galba and the Twelfth Legion in the Alps while

⁶⁷ Caes. Gall. 2.33: *...pugnatumque ab hostibus ita acriter est, ut a viris fortibus in extrema spe salutis iniquo loco contra eos qui ex vallo turribusque tela iacerent pugnari debuit, cum in una virtute omnis spes salutis consisteret*. At 2.24, Caesar similarly remarks that the Gauls, “even when their hope of safety came to an end (*in extrema spe salutis*), presented extraordinary *virtus*, when, while their front lines fell, the next lines persisted on top of those who fell, and battled over their corpses” (*At hostes etiam in extrema spe salutis tantam virtutem praestiterunt, ut, cum primi eorum cecidissent, proximi iacentibus insisterent atque ex eorum corporibus pugnarent*).

he returned to Rome in 57. Galba settled the Twelfth Legion in Octodurus, dividing the town in two, one part for the local Gauls, and the other for the Romans. The local Gallic tribes, namely the Nantuates, the Veragri, and the Seduni, assaulted the Twelfth Legion, fearing that the Romans were attempting to annex their territory. During the Battle of Octodurus, the Gauls besieged the part of town which the Romans occupied. As pending disaster and imminent doom loomed over the Romans, the centurion Publius Sextius Baculus and the military tribune Gaius Volusenus, a man of great strategy and *virtus* informed Galba that their only hope of safety was to make a last attempt at charging the enemies head on. Galba conceded; and upon his signal, the Romans were instructed “to charge out of the camp and to place their hope of safety in their martial valor” (*omnem spem salutis in virtute ponerent*).⁶⁸ Caesar construes that the only hope of safety during battle is entrenched in his soldiers’ capability in *virtus*. If his soldiers do not display *virtus* on the battlefield, then the hope of their own safety will disintegrate, leaving them vulnerable to death. Only by their *virtus* could they overcome the enemy, which ensured their hope of safety.

The hope of safety through *virtus* goes beyond individual safety and also affects the safety and security of nations. In Book III, Publius Crassus, an officer of Caesar, had been sent to Aquitania in 56 to conduct a campaign in the territory where, a few years before, the proconsul Lucius Valerius Praeconinus was defeated and killed, and where the proconsul Lucius Mallius had barely escaped with nothing but his life. The Sotiates, having gathered a sizeable force with a cavalry, attacked Crassus and his soldiers. Caesar reckons that, “The battle was long and fierce, and the Sotiates, relying on their [past] superior victories, believed that the safety of all of Aquitania depended on their martial valor (*in sua virtute*).”⁶⁹ That the safety of an entire nation hinged on the collective martial valor of that nation’s military was imperative. And although Caesar never states that the safety of Rome depended on the *virtus* of her military forces, we can extrapolate that the same rationale was also applied to Rome concerning the safety of the Roman

⁶⁸ Caes. Gall. 3.5: *...post dato signo ex castris erumperent atque omnem spem salutis in virtute ponerent.*

⁶⁹ Caes. Gall. 3.20: *Pugnatum est diu atque acriter, cum Sotiates superioribus victoriis freti in sua virtute totius Aquitaniae salutem positam putarent...*

people. The *virtus* of Caesar and the Roman military averted the danger which the Gauls posed to the security of the Roman people. Then it is no wonder that the credibility of Roman *virtus* had to be recognized and acknowledged by the general public, so that the Roman people were reassured that they were living in a safe and secure nation, the borders of which were protected by the *virtus* of the Roman military and its *imperator*.

II.VI: Virtus Needed to Be Recognized for Praise, Renown, and Glory

The recognition of one's credibility in *virtus* by the public was requisite for the *virtus* to be considered legitimate, generating the reassurance of safety and security for the people, and fame and glory for the possessor. In Book VIII, Aulus Hirtius testifies that *virtus* must bear witness if it were to become renowned by the public. During the Siege of Uxellodunum in 51, the Gallic townspeople rained down flaming barrels of pitch onto the Romans below their city walls. While dodging the fiery projectiles, and clashing their swords with the enemy, "our soldiers," according to Aulus Hirtius, "although disadvantaged by this genre of danger in battle, nevertheless endured with the strongest spirit. For the event continued on at their lofty position, and in sight of our army, and great shouting from both sides emanated. Thus, each soldier, in as conspicuous a manner as he could, in order that his martial valor (*virtus*) be witnessed and be more renowned, endured the spears and the flames of the enemies head on."⁷⁰ Aulus Hirtius highlights the Romans' concern with publicizing their martial prowess on the battlefield, especially during such a lethal situation, so as to acquire incredible recognition, notoriety, and fame from those who bear witness, and from those who hear of such displays of courage.

Similarly, in Book VII, during the Battle of Alesia, Caesar indicates that, among both the Romans and the Gauls, the desire for renown and the fear of disgrace roused the *virtus* of both sides. Caesar states

⁷⁰ Caes. Gall. 8.42: *Milites contra nostri, quamquam periculoso genere proeli locoque iniquo premebantur, tamen omnia fortissimo sustinebant animo. Res enim gerebatur et excelso loco et in conspectu exercitus nostri, magnusque utrimque clamor oriebatur. Ita quam quisque poterat maxime insignis, quo notior testatiorque virtus esset eius, telis hostium flammaeque se offerebat.*

that, “as the action ignited, in view of all, and no deed, either just or unjust, could be hidden, both sides raised to martial courage (*ad virtutem*) their desire for renown (*laudis*) and their fear of disrepute (*ignominiae*).⁷¹ Caesar implies that both sides envisioned victory for themselves, and pitched their *virtus* against one another in battle to attain that victory. Moreover, Caesar demonstrates that the expectation for both sides was not only to win renown, but also to deflect disrepute. Caesar rationalizes that the *virtus* of only one side will defeat the *virtus* of the other, leading one side to victory and praise, and the other to defeat and disgrace. The defeated not only forfeit their opportunity to garner renown, but also their opportunity to gain *virtus*, the lack of which resulted in shame and disrepute.

That praise, status, renown, and victory were the main objectives of acquiring *virtus* in battle for both Caesar and his military forces is substantiated by a passage in *de Bello Africo*, in which Caesar, during the Battle of Thapsus against Scipio in 46, lauded the *virtus* of his veterans among his Fifth, Seventh, Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Legions, and encouraged his recruits to replicate the *virtus* of the veterans if they should desire glory. The author states, “Caesar himself made his way around his soldiers by foot, reminding them of the martial deeds (*virtutes*) of the veterans from previous battles, galvanizing their spirits with such flattery. As for the burgeoning recruits, who had never before contended in a pitched battle, he urged them to simulate the martial valor (*virtus*) of the veterans, i.e. their martial skills displayed in battle, and to possess a desire for the same fame (*fama*), status (*locus*), and repute (*nomen*) gained through victory (*victoria parta*).”⁷² There are two pivotal points here.

First, it is indicated in this passage that *virtus* is acquired from battle against the enemy, as Caesar reminds his veterans to remember the *virtus* they gained in their previous battles. Similarly, in a passage

⁷¹ Caes. Gall. 7.80: *Quod in conspectu omnium res gerebatur neque recte ac turpiter factum celari poterat, utrosque et laudis cupiditas et timor ignominiae ad virtutem excitabant.* For another example of the Romans’ fear of disgrace and disrepute (*ignominia*) from failing to succeed in war, cf. Caes. Alex. 42.

⁷² Caes. Afr. 81: *...ipse pedibus circum milites concursans virtutesque veteranorum proeliaque superiora commemorans blandeque appellans animos eorum excitabat. Tirones autem, qui numquam in acie dimicassent, hortabatur ut veteranorum virtutem aemularentur eorumque famam, locum, nomen victoria parta cuperent possidere.* Cf. similarly Caes. Gall. 2.21. Appian, too, states that Caesar often battled for victory, cf. Civ. 2.104.

from *de Bello Gallico*, Caesar himself reaffirms that *virtus* is acquired through battle. In Book III, Sabinus, a lieutenant of Caesar, defeats the Gallic Venelli in battle. He states that, “the success [of Sabinus] manifested itself on account of their strategic location, the enemies’ fatigue and inexperience, and the martial valor (*virtute*) of the soldiers and their experience from greater [previous] battles, the result of which shows that they [the Gauls] could not bear even one of our attacks, and they immediately turned their backs and fled.”⁷³ Caesar demonstrates that not only was *virtus* acquired in combat, but that, by Roman *virtus*, the Gauls were defeated, consequently resulting in Roman victory. Second, that victory, renown, rank, and fame were unequivocally linked to *virtus* within the framework of Roman warfare is transparent, as indicated by the passage from *de Bello Africo*. *Virtus* was the primary quality needed for the acquisition of victory, which resulted in fame, status, and renown. And should Caesar’s legions be successful in battle, then the *fama*, *locus*, and *nomen* generated from *virtus* and *victoria*, achieved by the soldiers, will have also reflected upon Caesar, magnifying his own glory as *imperator* of Rome.

II.VII: Virtus, Bringer of Victory

Similarly, in three passages in *de Bello Civile*. Caesar indicates that *virtus* was conceived as the bringer of victory. One evening, during the Battle of Dyrrachium against Pompey in 48, as both Pompey and Caesar had besieged each other’s fortified encampments, Caesar covertly sneaked out of his camp with 33 cohorts in order to attack Pompey’s secondary camp, in which one of Pompey’s legions was stationed. With a swift assault on Pompey’s camp, Caesar states that, “nevertheless, our men conquered by their martial valor” (*Sed tamen nostri virtute vicerunt*).⁷⁴ Caesar clearly asserts that, during this assault on the Pompeians at Pompey’s secondary camp, Caesar’s forces, by their *virtus*, conquered the enemies. This is demonstrative of the fact that Caesar considered *virtus* to be the means with which to conquer Rome’s enemies, and the means by which victory is gained.

⁷³ Caes. Gall. 3.19: *Factum est opportunitate loci, hostium inscientia ac defetigatione, virtute militum et superiorum pugnarum exercitatione, ut ne unum quidem nostrorum impetum ferrent ac statim terga verterent*. Cf. also Riggsby 2006, 86.

⁷⁴ Caes. Civ. 3.67. Cf. also Grillo 2012, 52.

Similarly, the author of *de Bello Alexandrino* confirms that *virtus* was believed to have conquered entire nations and subjugated their peoples as a result of their victory. After Caesar had defeated the Ptolemies during the Siege of Alexandria in 47, he entered Alexandria to celebrate his victory; “and upon his arrival, he took for himself his fruits merited by his *virtus* and by his magnanimous spirit: for, all of the people of the city threw down their arms, abandoning their fortifications... and, as Caesar approached, they ran to meet him, and surrendered themselves to him.... Caesar, passing through the fortifications of the enemies, consoled the people and received them under his protection.... And Caesar became the master of Egypt and Alexandria.”⁷⁵ The author makes an important point that the subjugated nation and people of Alexandria were now considered the fruits, i.e. the prize of war, acquired by Caesar’s *virtus*. No longer capable of defending themselves against Caesar, the Alexandrians threw down their weapons, thereby surrendering their *virtus* to Caesar; and, devoid of the *virtus*, they became his prize and his subjects, thanks to Caesar’s own *virtus* and *victoria*.

This is comparable to the way Cicero also employs *virtus* in his *Philippics*, in which he implies that victory is the product of *virtus*. He states that “By *virtus*, your ancestors first conquered (*devicerunt*) Italy, then destroyed Carthage, overthrew Numantia, and brought the most powerful kings and the most bellicose peoples into the domain of the Roman Empire.”⁷⁶ Cicero confirms that the Romans used their *virtus* to conquer, destroy, and overthrow entire nations, the people of which, including the most powerful kings and the most bellicose peoples, lost their *virtus* to the Romans, which resulted in their loss of martial capability needed to overpower the Romans, in the surrender of their autonomy to the Romans, and in Rome’s victory over their conquered enemies.

⁷⁵ Caes. Alex. 32-3: *Dignum adveniens fructum virtutis et animi magnitudinis tulit: omnis enim multitudo oppidanorum armis proiectis munitionibusque suis relictis... advenienti Caesari occurrerunt seque ei dederunt. Caesar in fidem receptos consolatus per hostium munitiones.... Caesar Aegypto atque Alexandria potitus...*

⁷⁶ See full quote at the beginning of Chapter II; Cic. Phil. 4.5: *Hac [virtute] maiores vestri primum universam Italiam devicerunt, deinde Carthaginem exciderunt, Numantiam everterunt, potentissimos reges, bellicosissimas gentis in dicionem huius imperii redegerunt.*

In a similar case, even though Caesar was eventually defeated at the Battle of Dyrrachium, he credits Pompey with a victory, albeit reluctantly, and, once again, couples *virtus* with *victoria* by way of *vincere*, “to conquer.” He states that, “Just as if they [the Pompeians] conquered [us] by their *virtus*, and just as if a reversal of affairs was not possible, it happened that, by word of mouth and by letters disseminated over the entire world, they publicly announced their victory of that day.”⁷⁷ In this instance, the Pompeians conquered Caesar’s forces by their *virtus*, consequently leading them to *victoria*. This passage demonstrates that not only could *virtus* conquer and be conquered, but also that *virtus* was conceived to be the bringer of *victoria* – victory.

Lastly, during the Battle of Pharsalus in 48, as the battle was pitched between Pompey’s legions and Caesar’s Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Legions, Caesar breaks his third line, withdrawing several cohorts. Caesar states, “From these, he [Caesar] instituted a fourth line, which stood opposite the cavalry, and showing what he wanted to be done with them, he foretells that his victory on that day rests on the martial valor (*virtute*) of his cohorts.”⁷⁸ That *virtus* was considered by Caesar to be the bringer of *victoria* is, here, most transparent.

II.VIII: The Visual Representations of *Virtus* During the Reign of Caesar

Caesar was conscious of the fact that the most enduring way in which to reflect *virtus* was through visual exhibition, similar to the way in which Marcellus and Marius permanently displayed their *virtus* for the general public through the construction of their temples to Virtus. In *de Bello Hispaniensi*, during the Battle of Munda in 45 against Pompey in Spain, the Romans installed a display of *virtus* in order to allegorize their martial superiority over the Pompeians and the Gauls of the town of Munda.⁷⁹ Caesar, having routed the Pompeians, dispatched Quintus Fabius Maximus to besiege the city. The author asserts

⁷⁷ Caes. Civ. 3.72: *Sed proinde ac si virtute vicissent neque ulla commutatio rerum posset accidere per orbem terrarum fama ac litteris victoriam eius diei concelebrabant.* Cf. also Grillo 2012, 52.

⁷⁸ Caes. Civ. 3.89: *ex his quartam instituit equitatuque opposuit et quid fieri vellet ostendit monuitque eius diei victoriam in earum cohortium virtute constare.*

⁷⁹ For Appian’s account, cf. Civ. 2.105.

that, “The enemies’ shields and spears were collected to make a palisade, and their dead bodies served as a rampart, on top of which their human heads, impaled on sword points, were set up in a row with each turned to face the town, so as to both confine the enemy with a rampart, and also to instill fear in the enemy with a visual representation (*insignia proposita*) of our martial valor (*virtutis*). And after surrounding the oppidum with the javelins and spears taken from the corpses of the enemies, the Gauls began their attack.”⁸⁰ Caesar’s legions visualized their Roman *virtus* by creating an exhibition of their defeated foes not only to engender fear among the besieged Pompeians and the Gauls, but to also bring to witness their superiority in martial valor after their victory. Their martial valor was not only witnessed by their fellow comrades, but they also forced recognition of their *virtus* on their surviving enemies, who fled in fear, abandoning the town of Munda, and abandoning their *virtus*. Furthermore, if the weapons, armor, and decapitated corpses of the enemies served as *insignia proposita* for the martial valor of the Romans, then it can be posited that the enemies, devoid of their weapons, armor, and heads, also serve as a morbid, albeit effective, reminder of the enemies’ defeated *virtus* that had been surrendered to the Romans. This passage demonstrates that, when the *virtus* of the enemies was taken away from them, it became the property of the Romans, who proudly displayed it as their own.

Even though Caesar was assassinated before he could have conceivably constructed a victory monument for himself to commemorate his *virtus*, he nevertheless presented his own visual communication of his *virtus* through his issues of coins. In 48/7, after returning to Rome from Gaul, Caesar minted coins to commemorate his victory over the Gauls – his first attempt to publicize his *virtus*, earned

⁸⁰ Caes. *Hisp.* 32: *Ex hostium armis scuta et pila pro vallo, pro caespite cadavera collocabantur, insuper abscisa in gladiatorum mucrone capita hominum ordinata ad oppidum conversa universa, ut et ad hostium timorem virtutisque insignia proposita viderent et vallo circumcluderentur adversarii. Ita Galli tragulis iaculisque oppidum ex hostium cadaveribus circumplexi oppugnare coeperunt.*



Figure 18: Denarius of Caesar depicting trophy made of Gallic spoils. 48/7 BCE.



Figure 19: Denarius of Caesar depicting a Gallic prisoner and trophy. 48/7 BCE.

during battle in Gaul, through a visual medium.⁸¹ The reverses of his coins are martial in theme, and invoke images of victory and defeat. One denarius depicts a Gallic trophy on the reverse with the legend *CAESAR*. The trophy is comprised of the enemy's armor, a decorated Gallic shield on the left, a *carnyx* on the right, a Gallic horned-helmet, and an axe to the right (**Fig. 18**).⁸² Cowering behind the tree trunk of the towering trophy is a kneeling Gaul, whose pathetic image symbolizes the subjugation of the Gauls under the hegemony of Rome. Depicted on the reverse of another variation of the type is a similar trophy composed of Gallic armaments above the legend *CAESAR* (**Fig. 19**).⁸³ However, this time, the kneeling Gaul, bound behind his back, is forced to gaze upon the trophy to bear witness to the fact that his former weapons and armor – the physical manifestations of his *virtus* once displayed in battle – now belong to Caesar.

If we reflect on the way in which Marcellus despoiled Viridomarus of his armor and set up the *spolia opima* as an emblem of the *virtus* he had taken from the Gauls and gained for himself, we can contextualize Caesar's choice of imagery within this same martial milieu. Arms and armor were requisite during battle, which facilitated one's chances of gaining *virtus* on the battlefield; and, conversely, the lack of arms resulted in the loss of *virtus*. Caesar had visually stripped away the Gaul's *virtus*, leaving him half-naked, fettered, and helpless, and has appropriated and reformed

⁸¹ Caesar's first issue of coins occurred in 49, cf. RRC 443 (Crawford 1974, 461), which depict an elephant trampling a dragon and CAESAR in the exergue on the reverse, and pontifical emblems on the obverse: *culullus*, *aspergillum*, axe, and *apex*. Weinstock 1971, 61; Grueber 1910, i.xlvi-ii, lvi, i.498-500. Cf. also 505-7 for catalogue and descriptions: BMCRR 3953-3960; RRC 452, 468 (Crawford 1974, 467); Sear 2000, 266-72.

⁸² RRC 452/2 (Crawford 1974, 467). The obverse depicts a profiled head of an unidentified female, who wears an oak-wreath and diadem, as well as a necklace and earrings. Grueber (1910, i.506) posits Pietas and Sear (2000, 268) posits Clementia, although there is no evidence for any identification.

⁸³ RRC 452/5 (Crawford 1974, 467); BMCRR i.3960 (Grueber 1910, i.507).

virtus into a Roman trophy, subsequently becoming a visual expression of his own *virtus*. The placement of Caesar's name between the trophy and the conquered Gaul visualizes Caesar's ownership of both the Gaul himself and also of his *virtus*, by which the Gauls could no longer threaten the safety of Rome and the security of the Roman people. Its visual significance would not have been lost on the viewer, who would have clearly comprehended its iconography, namely that the Gauls have been conquered by Caesar and by his *virtus*. And the reassurance of safety and security which the iconography of this issue provided for the people of Rome would have elicited the approval and respect which Caesar needed to legitimize his *virtus*, and garner the glory and public renown he pursued in his war with the Gauls.⁸⁴ When Caesar and the Romans conquered the *virtus* of their adversaries, that very *virtus* became a virtual *spolium* on which the Romans prided themselves. Therefore, just as *de Bello Gallico* advertised Caesar's *virtus* without claiming *virtus* for himself, so, too, do his issues of coins, which thematically complement *de Bello Gallico*. Together, they strengthen Caesar's association with *virtus* in a visual and allegorical way, lest Caesar explicitly attribute *virtus* to himself, which, alone, could not validate his *virtus*; for, it had to be publicly recognized in order for him to reap the glory of *virtus*.

In 46, Caesar's *virtus* was publicly recognized. He celebrated a quadripartite triumph in Rome for the war in Gaul, the war in Egypt, the war against Pharnaces of Pontus, and the war against King Juba of Numidia.⁸⁵ In 60, he had been granted a triumph for his victory in Spain, after his soldiers had hailed him as *imperator*, which was even anticipated by a *supplicatio* in Rome.⁸⁶ However, he forewent the triumph in lieu of running for consul in 59, and rather selected to promote his political career – his *honos* – by returning to his campaigns and by proving himself victorious in warfare.⁸⁷ For even Caesar acknowledged that *honos* was predicated on *virtus*, i.e. his military experience that led him to five consulships and five

⁸⁴ Cf. Dio (43.19-20), who corroborates that, during Caesar's triumph in 46, the people greatly admired him for his military accomplishments.

⁸⁵ Dio 43.19; App. *Civ.* 2.101; Suet. *Caes.* 37-9; Flor. 2.13; Weinstock 1971, 60-79; Deutsch 1926.

⁸⁶ Dio 44.41; App. *Civ.* 2.8; Plut. *Caes.* 12.4; Weinstock 1971, 60-4.

⁸⁷ Plut. *Caes.* 13; Suet. *Caes.* 18; Weinstock 1971, 60-1.

dictatorships in the 40s.⁸⁸ The *triumphus Gallicus* was the first and most jubilant, and rightly so; for, according to Plutarch, although it was not quite a full ten years in which Caesar waged war in Gaul, he nevertheless conquered 800 cities, subjugated three nations, and fought pitched battles with over three million men, among whom one million were killed in single combat, and among whom he took many more as prisoner.⁸⁹ The triumph not only included the traditional procession, but also gladiatorial matches, theatrical performances, chariot races, *venationes*, athletic contests, and a naval battle.⁹⁰ Suetonius states that such a multitude of people attended the triumphal events that many visitors pitched tents in the streets and along the road; and there were reports that many were crushed to death in the crowds, including two senators.⁹¹ Needless to say, the Roman people were conscious of Caesar's military achievements and of his subjugation of Rome's most villainous opponent, the Gauls, the confirmation of which was provided by Caesar's triumphal exhibitions of his *virtus*.

Caesar was no stranger to visual allegory, as the iconography of his minted coins affirm. His triumphs were deliberately curated as allegorical spectacles of conquered and acquired *virtus*. During the procession, Caesar presented three personified statues of the Rhine, the Rhône, and a golden statue of *captivus Oceanus*, "the captured Ocean," whose images allegorically represented the subjugation of Germany, Gaul, and the sea of Britain, respectively.⁹² However, the primary spectacle of *virtus* as visual allegory during his Gallic triumph was the procession of captive Gauls, who were forced to march through the streets of Rome, so that the Roman people could gaze upon Gaul's mightiest warriors, stripped of their *virtus*.⁹³ To make the procession of prisoners even more poignant, Caesar sentenced King Vercingetorix to death, having departed his life without *virtus* – a disgraceful death.⁹⁴ Similarly, during the

⁸⁸ Caesar was consul in 59, 48, 46, 45, and 44; Dio 44.1

⁸⁹ Plut. *Caes.* 15, 37.

⁹⁰ Plut. *Caes.* 65; Suet. *Caes.* 39.

⁹¹ Suet. *Caes.* 39.

⁹² App. *Civ.* 2.102; Flor. 2.13. Moreover, Cicero states that a representation of the city of Massilia (Marseilles) was also carried through the triumphal procession, cf. Cic. *Phil.* 8.18; *Off.* 2.28.

⁹³ Suet. *Caes.* 80.

⁹⁴ Our only source on the death of Vercingetorix during Caesar's triumph is found in Dio 43.19.

triumphus Alexandrinus, Caesar led the captives taken from his decisive naval victory on the Nile, and paraded allegorical representations of both the Nile and of the Pharos of Alexandria.⁹⁵ And during the triumph over Pharnaces of Pontus, Caesar paraded a painting of Pharnaces in flight – a visual testament to Caesar’s superior martial valor over Pharnaces, who, abandoning his *virtus*, fled from the Battle of Zela in 47, where Caesar proclaimed *veni, vidi, vici*.⁹⁶

In 46/5, while Caesar was in Spain, he minted another issue of coins which feature militaristic characteristics similar to his 48/7 issue, published to exhibit his *virtus* (Fig. 20).⁹⁷ On the reverse of a denarius stands a trophy above the legend *CAESAR* made of Gallic accoutrements: an oblong shield, spear, and *carnyx* to the left, a rectangular shield, spear, and *carnyx* to the right, a short Gallic tunic, and a horned helmet.⁹⁸ A muscular and naked Gaul, wearing a beard, kneels at the left. His hands are bound behind



Figure 20: Denarius of Caesar depicting Gallic prisoners and a trophy. 46/5 BCE.

his back, and he is made to gaze upon the arms and armor his people once donned – the physical emblem of their *virtus*. Seated to the right is a female abandoned to anguish. She wears a full-bodied garment draped to her feet and places her left hand on her lowered head as a gesture of sorrow. Crawford postulates that the female is a representation of a typical Gaul, contingent upon the Gallic iconography, which is logical.⁹⁹ However, Grueber believes that she is rather the personification of Hispania, which was partially subjugated by Caesar in 46, and because the series itself was minted in Spain.¹⁰⁰ The use of two Gauls in this issue would seem rather redundant. And since the male Gaul is bound in genuflection, and the female is neither bound nor does she bend the knee, I am

⁹⁵ App. *Civ.* 2.101; Flor. 2.13.

⁹⁶ App. *Civ.* 2.101; Plut. *Caes.* 50; Suet. *Caes.* 37; Deutsch 1926, 102.

⁹⁷ *RRC* 468/2 (Crawford 1974, 479); *BMCRR* ii.86 (Grueber 1910, ii.368-9).

⁹⁸ For a discussion on the Gallic horned helmet, see Zawadzka 2009.

⁹⁹ Crawford 1974, 479.

¹⁰⁰ Grueber 1910, 369.

inclined to consider that she allegorically represents a nation, as Crawford proposes. Even if this issue were minted in Spain, Caesar conquered all of Gaul, not all of Spain; and, moreover, the Gallic iconography, especially concerning the *carnyces*, the male Gaul and the horned helmet, implies that Caesar was still quite boastful in 45 about ushering Gaul into the domain of Rome. That the female represents Gallia is not unreasonable. In any case, she is an allegorical personification of subjugated barbarism, which is demonstrative of the fact that Caesar was conscious of visual allusions and propagandistic media. Moreover, Caesar was able to represent his martial prowess through his allegorical displays of his *virtus* without having to append *virtus* – a quality which had to be recognized by the public – to himself.

Moreover, in 45, it was decreed by the senate that Caesar should proffer the *spolia opima* to Jupiter in the Temple of Jupiter Feretrius – a deed that only one [historical] man of superior martial valor before Caesar accomplished: Marcellus.¹⁰¹ Caesar's *virtus* was recognized by the senate with their decree to allow Caesar to be the second Roman ever to dedicate the trophy of martial valor to Jupiter Feretrius, which was considered the greatest military distinction conferred on any man.¹⁰²

As for Caesar himself, there are some circumstantial indications that Caesar was affiliated with the cult of Virtus. First, Weinstock posits that Caesar may have considered constructing a temple to Virtus, namely, because his influential uncle Marius had constructed his Temple of Honos and Virtus, and also because Pompey also constructed a shrine to Venus Victrix, Honos, Virtus, Felicitas, and likely also to Victoria in the *ima cavea* of his theatre, according to the *Fasti Amiternini*.¹⁰³ However, the way in which Caesar meticulously treated *virtus* in *de Bello Gallico*, in which he evaded affixing *virtus* to himself,

¹⁰¹ Dio 44.4.3; Weinstock 1971, 233.

¹⁰² Weinstock 1971, 233. Perhaps in conjunction with Caesar's dedication of the *spolia opima*, the senate also decreed that, in late 45 or early 44, after his return from celebrating the *Feriae Latinae* on the Alban Mount, Caesar be permitted to celebrate an *ovatio*, just as Marcellus also received one: Suet. *Caes.* 79; Dio 44.4; Weinstock 1971, 319-26; McDonnell 2006, 317.

¹⁰³ According to the *Fasti Amiternini* for August 12th: "To Venus Victrix, Honos, Virtus, and Felicitas in the Marble Theatre" (*Veneri Victrici, Hon[ori], Virtut[i], Felicitati in theatro marmoreo*). The *Fasti Alfani*: *V V H V V Felicita*, by which we presume that the fourth "V" belongs to Victoria, or it is a dittographic error, cf. Clark 2007, 225-6; Weinstock 1971, 232.

demonstrates that he would not have so explicitly made a public exhibition of his own *virtus* with a new temple dedicated to Virtus. However, beyond Rome, there is some evidence that others, besides Cicero, associated Caesar with *virtus* and/or Virtus, thus, acknowledging that Caesar was, indeed, a man of *virtus*.

Weinstock conjectures that a plan may be inferred from the Caesarian colony in Spain inhabited by the Ituci, which was called Colonia Virtus Iulia, according to Pliny, and another in Africa called Colonia Iulia Iuvenalis Honoris et Virtutis Cirta.¹⁰⁴ It is not surprising that these Caesarian colonies were founded under the name “Virtus,” as it was by Caesar’s *virtus* that he triumphed over his enemies after winning decisive battles in both Spain and Africa. And associating the colonies’ title “Virtus” and “Honos and Virtus” respectively with the *gens* Iulia removes any doubt that Caesar was affiliated with the goddess Virtus, who may have become the patron deity of these two Caesarian colonies.¹⁰⁵

The Caesarian colony named Colonia Iulia Iuvenalis Honoris et Virtutis Cirta – “the New Julian Colony of Honos and Virtus at Cirta” – is located in Numidia (modern Algeria), and has yielded some evidence of possible cult worship of Honos and Virtus. Originally a city of the Numidians, Cirta came under the dominion of Rome by Caesar in 46, after his conquest of North Africa, and was then repopulated by Roman colonists by Caesar’s authority, and, later, by Augustus’. Vittinghoff attributes the colony’s foundation to Augustus; however, Weinstock argues that this does not exclude the possibility for

¹⁰⁴ Plin. 3.12; *ILS* 6857; Weinstock 1971, 233.

¹⁰⁵ The fragmentary and heavily-damaged inscription appears to be a part of an unidentified Roman’s *cursus honorum*, in which he appears to have been a veteran of the XXXIII Legion. The XXXIII Legion was originally recruited by Caesar during the first campaign against Pompey in Spain in 49; and, through some detective work, Villanueva has concluded that Caesar’s veterans of the XXXIII under Octavian were settled in Virtus Iulia between 30 and 28. Even though the inscription does not prove that Torreparedones is Colonia Virtus Iulia, the case seems likely. Unfortunately, no images of Virtus have emanated from previous excavations at Torreparedones. However, the site is still being excavated; and some of the yields are currently located in the museum in the nearby town of Baena, including a life-size marble cuirass-statue that attests to the martial valor of an unidentified Roman *imperator*: Villanueva 2012. For a recently published monograph on the macellum at Virtus Iulia, cf. López, J.A.M., A.M. Rosa, R.M.M. Sánchez. 2012. *El Macellum de la Colonia Ituci Virtus Iulia (Torreparedones. Baena-Córdoba)*. SALSVM 3, Monografías del Museo Histórico Municipal de Baena. Baena, Spain. Cf. also a short article: Villanueva, A.V. 2013. *La Curia y el Foro de la Colonia Virtus Iulia Ituci*, in Huertas, B.S, P.M. Cruz, J.M.N. Celdrán, J.R.A. Bayona (eds.), *Las Sedes de los Ordines Decurionum en Hispania: Análisis Arquitectónico y Modelo Tipológico*. Insituto de Arqueología, Mérida, pp. 233-48.

Caesarian planning, especially after his conquest of Africa.¹⁰⁶ Accordingly, there is literary evidence that lends credence to Caesarian planning. According to *de Bello Africo*, while Caesar was waging war in Numidia in 46, his ally Publius Sittius, a native of Nuceria, captured the town of Cirta, where he was placed in charge as governor, and was also granted permission to found another colony nearby, the name of which also alludes to Caesar – Colonia Iulia Veneria Cirta Nova Sicca.¹⁰⁷ As a comrade of Caesar, it is permissible to suggest that Sittius founded the new Julian colony and associated Caesar with the cult of Honos and Virtus as a testament to his supreme command over his newly expanded empire. Furthermore, a private altar was discovered in Cirta with an inscription naming the recipient, the Roman senator Marcus Colcunius, the title “Colonia Iulia Iuvenalis Honoris et Virtutis Cirta,” from which the dedication came, and also the Emperor Septimius Severus.¹⁰⁸ Thus, this late-2nd- or early-3rd century inscription is somewhat irrelevant here, except for the fact that Cirta had preserved its original colonial name ascribed in the 1st century BCE, recognizing the *honos* and *virtus* of the *gens* Julia for hundreds of years.

More significant are the issues of coins featuring images of Honos and Virtus that were minted sometime during the age of Augustus in both of Sittius’ colonies: Colonia Iulia Veneria Cirta Nova Sicca and Colonia Iulia Iuvenalis Honoris et Virtutis Cirta.¹⁰⁹ A worn as from Cirta depicts the jugate heads of Honos and Virtus on the reverse, iconographically reminiscent of the denarius *serratus* minted in Rome in 70 by the moneyers Quintus Fufius Kalenus and Publius Mucius Scaevola [Cordus] (**Fig. 8**). However, the head of Virtus, wearing a crested bell helmet, is conversely superimposed on the head of Honos with

¹⁰⁶ See Vittinghoff, F. 1952. *Römische Kolonisation und Bürgerrechtspolitik unter Caesar und Augustus*. Wiesbaden, pp. 112-3; cf. Also, Weinstock 1971, 233, no. 4.

¹⁰⁷ *Caes. Afr.* 25; cf. pgs. 53-4 in Wilson, A.J.N. 1966. *Emigration from Italy in the Republican Age of Rome*. Manchester University Press, NY; Reid, J.S. 1913, 263-4.

¹⁰⁸ ILS 6857 = CIL 8.7041 = CIL 8.19423 = ILS 2.626: *M(arco) Coculnio / Sex(ti) fil(io) Quir(ina) / Quintilliano lato/clavo exornato ab / Imp(eratore) Caesare L(ucio) Septimio / Severo Pertinace Augusto Pio / Parthico Arabico Parthico / Adiabenico quaestori desig(nato) / post flamonium et honores / omnes quibus in colonia Iulia / Iuvenali Honoris et Virtutis Cirta / patria sua functus est / Florus Labaeonis fil(ius) / princeps et undecimprimus / gentis Saboidum amico merenti / de suo p[ro]sui[m]q[ue] dedec[us] / I(ocus) [d(atu)s] d(ecreto) d(ecurionum).*

¹⁰⁹ CIL 8, p. 1849; Grant 1946, 178-81; cf. also pg. 187, no. 701 in Burnett, A., M Amandry, P.P. Ripollès. 1992. *Roman Provincial Coinage I*. London-Paris; Alexandropoulos 2000, 314-22; Milhous 1992, 125.



Figure 21: As from Cirta featuring Honos and Virtus, ca. late-1st c. BCE.

legends HONOS and VIRTVS (**Fig. 21**). The reverse depicts the portrait of a male and bears the legend *P. SITTIVS MV...VS IIII VIR DECR DECVR D S.P.*, which identifies the portrait as Sittius.¹¹⁰ The founder of this unidentified town seems to also have been Publius Sittius, who was permitted by Caesar to establish his colonies under the name Iulia, signifying that Sittius associated the cult of Honos and Virtus with Caesar. Therefore, it seems probable that Caesar wished to transform Cirta, as well as other preexisting Numidian

towns, into Roman colonies, settled by his trusted Sittius, under the condition that they bear his name, along with, perhaps, a personal attribution, otherwise, the name Colonia Iulia Veneria Cirta Nova Sicca would not make much sense if the invocation of Venus did not reflect the Julian dynasty – a dynasty of which Publius Sittius was not a member.

II.IX: The Monument of Zoilos

In 1956, from an area near the northeast gate of a late-antique city wall in Aphrodisias, several marble reliefs depicting personifications were excavated, including TIMHI (Timē), ΔΕΜΟΣ (Demos), ΠΟΛΙΣ (Polis), and ΑΙΩΝ (Aion). Five years later, several more panels were discovered at various locations within the city, which included the personifications ΑΝΔΡΗΑ (Andreia), Roma, ΑΡ[ΗΤΗ] (Aretē), ΜΝΗΜΗ (Mnemē), ΠΙΣΤΙΣ (Pistis), along with a relief depicting a man named ΖΟΙΛΟΣ (Zoilos), all of which belonged to a grandiose mausoleum enveloped by a programmatic frieze.¹¹¹ Originally a native of Aphrodisias, Zoilos was captured and enslaved by the Romans, which resulted in his ascension to the status of freedman, agent, and confidante of the triumvir Octavian in the 30s. In a letter written to Stephanos, an emissary of

¹¹⁰ Grant (1946, 178, Pl. 6.15) states that the aes comes from the African town of Patrocinium Sittii (Simitthu? = Chemtou, Tunisia?); however, the Latin simply suggests that the town was “under the protection of Sittius,” and not that this was a town’s official name. The aes likely derives from Sittius’ mint at or near Cirta. There is also an aureus minted of the same type, cf. *CIL* 8, p. 1849.

¹¹¹ Smith 1993, 1-3.

Antony, in Laodicea-ad-Lycum in 39-8, Octavian refers to Zoilos as both an important and well-known patron in the area, and someone to whom Octavian was close, initiating the letter with: “Caesar to Stephanos, greetings. You know how fond I am of Zoilos.”¹¹² Moreover, Zoilos’ dedicatory inscription of the city’s stage building of the theatre, which took place sometime between 37 and 27, attests that he eventually became a freedman of Octavian: “Gaius Julius Zoilos, freedman of the Divine Julius’ son Caesar.”¹¹³ However, Zoilos’ rise in importance to freedman and to a favorite of Octavian seems to manifest too quickly after Caesar’ death in 44; and coupled with the fact that Zoilos gave emphasis to the Divine Julius in his city’s stage dedication, it seems more likely that Zoilos originally belonged to Caesar before his adoption by Octavian, as Smith believes.¹¹⁴

As Appian explicates, after the death of Caesar, multitudes of men, including Caesar’s friends, freedmen, and slaves, joined Octavian.¹¹⁵ Smith argues that Zoilos must have already been a freedman of Caesar before his death in 44; and after his service under Caesar, he passed to Octavian, who would inherit the loyalty and obligations due unto Caesar.¹¹⁶ Therefore, Smith surmises that Zoilos, a youth from an un-aristocratic Aphrodisian family, was captured and enslaved sometime in the 70s or in the 60s, and brought to Caesar.¹¹⁷ He, then, proposes that Zoilos was with Caesar in Asia Minor after the Battle of Pharsalus, perhaps involved in Caesar’s interest in Aphrodisias’ rites of Aphrodite, of whom Zoilos was a priest, and in whose sanctuary Caesar had dedicated a golden statue of Eros to the cult of Venus/Aphrodite, the mother of the *gens Iulia*. Moreover, Tacitus indicates that Caesar decreed Roman privileges to the people of Aphrodisias for their fidelity to the Romans, attested by their resistance during the Parthian invasion.¹¹⁸ The Parthian incursion was led by Labienus, a sympathizer of Brutus and Cassius, who invaded Asia Minor

¹¹² Smith 1993, 4, 11; Reynolds 1982, Doc. 10: *Καῖσαρ Στεφάνῳ χαίρειν Ὡς Ζώϊλον τὸν ἐμὸν φιλῶ ἐπίστασθαι.*

¹¹³ Smith 1993, 4, 11; Reynolds 1982, Doc. 36: *Γάϊος Ἰούλος Ζώϊλος θεοῦ Ἰούλου υἱοῦ Καίσαρος ἀπελεύθερος.*

¹¹⁴ Smith 1993, 5.

¹¹⁵ App. *Civ.* 3.11-12, 3.94; Smith 1993, 5.

¹¹⁶ Smith 1993, 5.

¹¹⁷ Smith 1993, 8.

¹¹⁸ Tac. *Ann.* 3.62; Reynolds 1982, no. 4, Doc. 12; Smith 1993, 5, 13.

in 41/0. Aphrodisias resisted the Parthians and was rewarded in 39 with great privileges; and Smith suggests that Zoilos was present during the Aphrodisian resistance, which would explain the martial themes represented in the frieze of his mausoleum. Smith also posits that it is possible that Zoilos accompanied Caesar to Gaul. This would explain how Zoilos, like so many others who were involved with the Gallic campaign, had acquired his personal fortune, which he later spent on his extravagant building projects in Aphrodisias.¹¹⁹ And, as we will see, Zoilos stressed his martial valor in the programmatic frieze of his mausoleum, which lends credence to Smith's hypothesis that he campaigned in Gaul with Caesar, who may have personally recognized Zoilos' *virtus* while on campaign.

Moreover, we have to consider the praenomen and cognomen of Zoilos – Gaius Julius, which is, needless to say, no coincidence; for, the name Gaius Julius was often conferred on freedmen of Caesar. Zoilos, therefore, was not the first confidante of Caesar to have been reestablished in Asia Minor after procuring emancipation, Roman citizenship, as well as the praenomen and nomen of his patron, as many freedmen did.¹²⁰ After his death, Caesar's former slaves were passed to Octavian, who recognized their loyalty to Caesar, and, eventually, granted them liberty, with which they could amass their fortunes, and could afford to construct their monumental tombs as proud freedmen of the *gens* Julia and citizens of Rome, including Gaius Julius Zoilos.

¹¹⁹ Smith 1993, 6, 8.

¹²⁰ Gaius Julius Theopompos of Knidos, a friend of Caesar, secured his freedom and rehabilitated his life as a new Roman citizen at Knidos under the name Gaius Julius: Str. 14.656; Plut. *Caes.* 48; Cic. *Att.* 13.7.1; Hirschfeld, G. 1886. *C. Julius Theopompus of Cnidus*. JHS, pp. 286-90; Smith 1993, 9. The son of Gaius Julius Theopompus of Knidos, Julius Artemidoros, was also a close friend of Caesar, and, apparently, tried to warn Caesar about the plot to assassinate Caesar on the Ides of March. Similarly, at Mylas, Gaius Julius Hybreas lead the resistance against Labienus and the Parthians: Str. 13.630, 14.659. And Gaius Julius Xenon of Thyateira, a local Caesarian magnate and the priest of the cult of Augustus and Dea Roma, was honored as benefactor, savior, hero, and founder of his city in conjunction with the hero cult of the *Iouliastai*, according to the inscription of his monumental tomb: *IGRR* 4.1276 = *TAM* 5, 1098; Smith 1993, 7, 9. Lastly, there was Julius Licinius, originally a Gaul, who was captured and enslaved by Caesar, before being donated to Octavian, eventually securing his manumission by Augustus, which led him to a noble career as procurator of Gaul during the Augustan era, and the construction of a monumental tomb on the Via Salaria in Rome: Suet. *Aug.* 7; Dio 54.21.2-8; Smith 1993, 10.



Figure 22: Monument of Zoilos featuring Andreia, Zoilos and Timē. Ca. 30s BCE.

The iconography of Side A of the Monument of Zoilos commemorates Zoilos' *honos* and *virtus*. The frieze is divided into two scenes by a herm: the celebration of Zoilos' martial valor and political career, personified by the coupling of Andreia and Timē on the left; and Zoilos' connection to the city and the state, personified by the Demos and

Polis on the right. In the first scene, on the left-hand side of the frieze, Zoilos (ΖΩΙΛΟΣ), stands between Andreia and Timē, clad in a late-Republican or early-Augustan era toga (without *sinus*), which emphasizes his Roman citizenship (**Fig. 22**).¹²¹ His right arm, broken, was raised, and would have extended toward Andreia; and his left hand is also broken. Smith believes that Zoilos' gesture with his right hand would have been one of public salutation or *adlocutio*; and his left probably held a *rotulus*.¹²²

To his left, Andreia, the Greek deity of manliness and courage, identified by her inscription (ΑΝΔΡΗΑ.), presents a shield, decorated with a winged aegis with gorgoneion, to Zoilos. The iconography of Andreia is novel, as this is the earliest known visual representation of the goddess. Andreia wears a long chiton, which is belted under the overfold at her waist, and falls to her bare feet. Over her chiton, she wears a cloak, which Smith believes is a shorter, military chlamys rather than a himation.¹²³ A balteus runs across her chest, which is indicative of the fact that she is meant to carry a sword. Andreia's head is no longer extant; however, the break around the head, and the wisps of long hair that escape onto the

¹²¹ Smith 1993, 27.

¹²² Smith 1993, 27.

¹²³ Smith 1993, 23.

nape of her neck indicate that she wore a helmet.¹²⁴ Smith notes that, in purely formal terms, Andreia is an adaptation of a stationary Victoria-Venus type, which ultimately derived from the early-Hellenistic Aphrodite of Capua type, but also equipped with martial accessories in order to underscore her military character.¹²⁵ This suggests that the commissioner of Zoilos' mausoleum was drawing on available visual models found at Aphrodisias – the city of Aphrodite, where visual representations of the goddess were naturally abundant. This also suggests that there were no apparent existing typologies for the representation of Andreia. Therefore, the artist had to create an image that would be understood by a Greek audience, not a Roman one. Before Andreia is a small pedestal that presented an indefinite object, now missing; however, the contour of the break suggests that the missing object was another helmet, likely of Corinthian type, perhaps meant to belong to the goddess or understood as another military attribute for Zoilos.¹²⁶

To the right of Zoilos stands Timē, inscribed TIMHI – the deity of civic and political honor. Timē is a feminine noun in Greek, thus, the gender of the noun naturally corresponds to the gender of the goddess. Timē stands barefoot and bare-breasted, wearing a himation draped around her left shoulder and hips. She extends her right arm over Zoilos' head in a gesture that indicates that she is in the midst of crowning him. In her left hand, she carries a cornucopia replete with overflowing fruit. Her image can be loosely attributed to the Aphrodite of Arles type, who is depicted with narrow hips and pert breasts.¹²⁷

The pairing of these two goddesses who represent honor and valor is not a common motif in the Greek world; in fact, this is the only one. However, it is quite familiar in the Roman world, especially in regards to an individual's celebration of these two virtues in their Roman manifestations: *honor* and *virtus*. Zoilos was a Greek-born native of Aphrodisias, who, eventually, became naturalized in the Roman world,

¹²⁴ Smith 1993, 23.

¹²⁵ Smith 1992, 23, 30. Cf. also Hölscher 1967, 150-5; id. 1970. *Die Victoria von Brescia*, *AntPlast* 10, 67-80; *LIMC* Aphrodite 627.

¹²⁶ Smith 1993, 23.

¹²⁷ Smith 1993, 27; cf. also Ridgway, B.S. 1976. *AJA* 80, 147-54; *LIMC* Aphrodite, 526.

receiving Roman citizenship, and assuming the praenomen and nomen Gaius Julius. Therefore, it is transparent that Zoilos became conscious of the ideological pairing of the deities Honos and Virtus while living under the jurisdiction of Rome sometime between his service under Caesar and his emancipation under Octavian, but most likely under Caesar. And living in the Roman world under the patronage of Caesar explains the influence of documenting his political and martial standing just as Caesar did with his *Commentarii* and with his issues of coins, many of which celebrate his *imperium* in conjunction with his military accomplishments.¹²⁸ Therefore, Andreia and Timē can be best understood as a Greek transcription of Virtus and Honos.¹²⁹



Figure 23: Monument of Zoilos, relief of Roma, seated next to a shield. Ca. 30s BCE.

That Zoilos was influenced by Roman visual ideology is corroborated by Dea Roma, who is depicted in proximity to Andreia, Zoilos, and Timē (**Fig. 23**). On Side B, just around the corner from Andreia, Roma is seated, and leans with her left elbow on a large, round shield. Her right hand is missing, but she carries a scepter, staff, or spear, the trace of which can be seen above her forearm. She dons a small Attic helmet, a type which may have also been used for Andreia. She wears a long chiton that drapes to her feet and also reveals her right breast, which Smith calls an “Amazonian tunic;” however, Amazonian tunics, like the one worn by

Virtus, are much shorter, typically worn above the knee.¹³⁰ This representation is a hybrid of the two, which constitutes the conventional outfit worn by Julio-Claudian representations of Roma. Note also that

¹²⁸ For example, *RRC* 476 (Crawford 1974, 486, 735; *BMCRR* Rome 4125), which bears the legend *CAESAR DIC TER* on the obverse, and depicts Minerva carrying Caesar’s trophy in one hand, and a spear and shield in the other.

¹²⁹ Smith (1993, 30-2) was the first scholar to make the ideological connection between the Greek Andreia and Timē and the Roman Virtus and Honos.

¹³⁰ Smith 1993, 44.



Figure 24: Didrachm featuring Roma and Pistis from Locri Epizephyrri. Ca. late-3rd century BCE.

her chiton is not belted. Across her chest, a balteus is strapped; and although the sword she carried no longer survives, traces of the hilt are extant.¹³¹ Roma's image is analogous to the conventional seated Roma type that can be traced as far back as the end of the 3rd century, when the Greeks of Locri Epizephyrri in Magna Graecia minted a didrachm that features this matronly, seated Roma type (**Fig. 24**).¹³² Moreover, Aphrodisias had its own cult of Roma since the 2nd century, the

influence of which must have derived from Smyrna, where her earliest cult is attested.¹³³ Although Roma does not appear in the same frieze as Andreia and Timē, she, nevertheless, became a common character in similar reliefs from Rome that feature Honos and Virtus.

The iconography of Virtus was not known in Greece at this time. There were no existing models for her in the Greek world in the 1st century BCE; therefore, her image was purely a Roman invention. If Zoilos had personally seen images of Virtus, which were found only in the city of Rome at this time, then he would have had to rely on his memory to convey to his artist what he wanted his Andreia/Virtus goddess to look like. Moreover, an Amazon warrior-woman for the new Greek Virtus/Andreia type may not have been understood by a Greek audience. The fact that the Greeks did not adopt an Amazon for the

¹³¹ Smith 1993, 44.

¹³² The profile of a laureate Zeus is represented on the obverse. The dating of the didrachm remains controversial and highly contested. It is dated to ca. 285-280 BCE purely on comparative stylistic analyses with similar Locrian coins minted during the Pyrrhic Wars, when Rome intervened on Pyrrhus' attempt to overtake Magna Graecia, cf. Thompson, R. 1961. *Early Roman Coinage II*. Copenhagen, pp 155f; Crawford 1974, 724; Caccamo Caltabiano, M. 1978. *Nota Sulla Moneta Locrese Zeus/Roma e Pistis*, in E. Livrea and G.A. Privitera (eds.), *Studi in Onore di Anthos Ardizzoni* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo & Bizzarri, 99-116. Or, the didrachm is dated to 204, based on literary evidence found in Livy. During the Second Punic War, the Locrians appealed to Rome and Rome's *fides* to end the cruel rule of Pleminius (29.18.19: *ad vos vestramque fidem supplices confugimus*: "we appeal to you [Rome] and your *fides* as suppliants"). This date is maintained by Mellor in all three of his comprehensive and authoritative works on Dea Roma: 1967, 14; 1975, 132; and 1981, 961-2. In my opinion, it is impossible to know which date is correct, since the current evidence supports both circumstances. Moreover, this image of Roma represents the personification of the city, not the divine goddess herself. Roma did not receive cult status of any kind until 195 BCE, in which the Greek city Smyrna honored Roma with a cult for the first time. Cf. also Jones 1990, 115; Clark 2007, 292.

¹³³ Smith 1993, 35.

iconography of Andreia as the Romans did for Virtus suggests that the Greeks did not comprehend or justify the reasons for which an Amazon model represented the personification of Greek manliness. It may have been too bewildering for the Greek audience of Aphrodisias, the people of which did not appreciate the Amazon type like the Romans did with Virtus and Roma, attested by the extant iconography of Amazons at Aphrodisias, who are exhibited as antagonists.¹³⁴ Therefore, the sculptor of Zoilos' mausoleum invented a more comprehensible image of Andreia for Aphrodisias' Greek audience. Andreia was, therefore, understandably modeled on their city's patron goddess, Aphrodite, equipped with the essential attributes of Virtus.¹³⁵ The Zoilos Andreia is a one-of-a-kind, and is neither replicated, nor reformulated, which not only corroborates that Andreia was not a popularized Greek virtue in Greek visual culture, but also that Zoilos was drawing on a Roman ideology about which he learned while serving under the command of Caesar.

Timē, on the other hand, was made to adapt to the Roman iconography of Honos, except naturally feminine to conform with the gender of the characteristic. The artist, once again, created a singular hybrid goddess, whose figure is modeled on an early-Hellenistic Aphrodite prototype (e.g. Aphrodite of Arles), combined with the attributes of Honos as Zoilos would have understood him.¹³⁶ Honos typically wore a hip-mantle that draped over his left shoulder, leaving his chest bare. Accordingly, Timē wears this hip-mantle that drapes over her left shoulder, as well – an iconographical feature that is unknown in the half-draped Aphrodite types, but is consistent with the iconography of Honos.¹³⁷ Honos' main attribute is the cornucopia, which Timē also carries in her left hand. Moreover, Timē extends her right hand onto the

¹³⁴ For example, the Agora Gate Reliefs, which depict Amazons fighting Greeks, and the statue group of Achilles slaying Penthesileia, who wears the iconic short Amazonian tunic, found at the Baths of Hadrian.

¹³⁵ It is important to note that definitive visual representations of Andreia are not attested again until the 3rd century CE, when her iconography fully conforms to the canonical iconography of Virtus on a Roman monument in Hierapolis. However, there may be an iconographically divergent manifestation of Andreia on the Sebasteion in Aphrodisias, which substantiates that the Greeks remained confounded over the iconography of Andreia in their struggle to reconcile her Greek image with the image of the Roman goddess Virtus. For the representation of Andreia as Virtus on the Sebasteion of Aphrodisias, see discussion below.

¹³⁶ Smith 1993, 30-1.

¹³⁷ Smith 1993, 31.

head of Zoilos in an effort to crown him, which is a duty of Honos, attested by the Marcellinus denarius of 101/0 (**Fig. 6**).



Figure 25: Aretē from the Library of Celsus, ca. early-2nd century CE.

The experimental hybridity of Zoilos' Andreia and Timē, whose images are constituted by representations of his city's patroness, Aphrodite, dressed with Roman attributes of Virtus and Honos, clearly indicates that Zoilos was influenced by the Roman ideological significance of the coupling of these two Roman deities. However, in order to keep their iconography comprehensible to the Greek viewer, who may have been bewildered by the visual prominence and generous gesture given to an Amazon, and since there was no available model for Andreia in the Greek world, Zoilos did his best to assimilate Honos and Virtus with their Greek equivalents, Timē and Andreia, respectively. Note also that the goddess Aretē is found on a different part of Zoilos' mausoleum (a fragment of her inscription survives), thereby indicating that the visual representation of Virtus' logical Greek equivalent was not Aretē, but Andreia.¹³⁸ That is to say, Virtus and Andreia were martial goddesses who represented military courage and valor. Aretē does not represent this, and has no visual equivalent in the Roman world. Aretē's most well-known image comes from the Library of Celsus (**Fig. 25**).¹³⁹ The Aretē of Celsus (ΑΡΕΤΗ ΚΕΛΣΟΥ) is a matronly figure, completely draped from head to toe

¹³⁸ For the inscribed fragment, cf. Smith 1993, 56-8.

¹³⁹ An inscription identifies a representation of Aretē on the 3rd-century BCE Apotheosis of Homer Relief (British Museum). She is one of four identical matronly figures dressed in long chitons and himations, heads covered. There is nothing martial about her image. There is, however, one singular coin from Bithynia, minted during the Domitianic era, that illustrates Aretē, with legend ΑΡΕΤΗ, wearing a short chiton, which seems to have been confused with and/or inspired by the dress of Virtus, cf. Smith 1993, 57; *LIMC* Aretē 4.

in a heavy chiton, wrapped with a himation. She seems ill-prepared to fight in battle, as there is nothing martial about her. Therefore, she represents something other than military bravery and martial prowess. Thus, we should imagine that the Aretē represented on Zoilos' mausoleum conformed to Aretē's standard iconography in the Greek world.

Lastly, Smith points out one curious feature about the inscriptions of Andreia and Timē. Originally, both inscriptions were written in the dative case with a final iota: "to Andreia;" "to Timē," whereas Zoilos' inscription remains in the nominative. Andreia's final iota was later erased in antiquity, but Timē's was not, indicative of the fact that the erasure did not occur due to an artist's error. Smith notes that nominal inscriptions are commonly used in Greek visual narrative; and to alter the common practice must signify an intended meaning. Since only Andreia and Time were written in the dative, Smith conjectures that the narrative makes more sense if we conceive of Zoilos, positioned between the two goddesses, as making a dedication to the two goddesses. Then the inscription could be read: "Zoilos, to Andreia and to Timē." In this case, the inscriptions served to underscore the character of the personifications as real cult deities, as Smith suggests.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, Smith posits that it is apparent from the erasure that the original datives were unexpected, and their significance was not self-evident. The iota from Andreia's inscription was erased, presumably, because it was perplexing to the Greek viewers; and the iota from Timē's inscription was not, most likely due to its inconspicuous placement on a third relief, after the break, according to Smith.¹⁴¹ That the iota of Andreia's inscription was later removed lends credence to my theory that Zoilos deliberately chose to exchange the Roman iconography of Honos and Virtus for a more intelligible visual narrative meant for a Greek audience, and even more specifically for an Aphrodisian audience, which would have very much appreciated Aphrodite-inspired images of Andreia and Timē over puzzling images of an Amazon and a semi-nude male youth with the Greek inscriptions ANΔPHAI and TIMHI, respectively.

¹⁴⁰ Smith 1993, 31.

¹⁴¹ Smith 1993, 31.

Yet, Zoilos did what he could to publicly relay the Roman ideological significance of the pairing of Honos and Virtus, namely by equipping his Andreia and Timē with the attributes of Virtus and Honos.

Precisely when and where Zoilos came under the influence of the cult of Honos and Virtus is unknown. However, that Zoilos likely served under Caesar, perhaps for as long as 20 years, according to Smith, before Caesar's death, is significant.¹⁴² We will never know with certainty whether or not Zoilos accompanied Caesar during any of his campaigns; however, the addition and iconography of Andreia – the Greek goddess of martial valor – would be troubling to explain if Zoilos did not possess martial experience during his lifetime. And if Zoilos followed Roman ideological thinking and understood that *honos* is often predicated by *virtus* in the Roman world, then it is not inconceivable to assume that Zoilos had some sort of military experience before Caesar manumitted him, after which he returned to Aphrodisias as a political agent of Octavian in the late 40s. We may never know the scope of Zoilos' military career; however, he was proud enough of his martial valor that he memorialized it on his mausoleum. Therefore, it is permissible to propose that Zoilos did serve in Caesar's military in some capacity during one or more of his campaigns, in which Zoilos learned about the ideological significance of *virtus* in the Roman army, and especially with Caesar.

II.X: Caesar's Legacy in Virtus

The identification of Honos and Virtus, in their Greek guises of Timē and Andreia, within the frieze of the mausoleum of Gaius Julius Zoilos, a former slave of Caesar and the Caesarian establishments of Colonia Virtus Iulia in Spain, and Colonia Iulia Iuvenalis Honoris et Virtutis Cirta in Africa, re-colonized with its new title by Caesar's confidante and ally Publius Sittius, all point to Caesar as their primary source of influence of *honos* and *virtus*. It does not seem to be coincidental that the only men affiliated in some way to the ideological pairing of Honos and Virtus in the second half of the 1st century – Gaius Julius Zoilos and

¹⁴² For the theoretical timeline of Zoilos' life constructed by Smith, cf. 1993, 4-10.

Publius Sittius – were men of Caesar. No late-Republican coins were minted featuring Honos and Virtus after 70 BCE. And Pompey was the last Roman to be affiliated with Honos and Virtus with his dedication of a shrine to Venus Victrix, Honos, Virtus, Felicitas, and Victoria in his marble theatre dedicated in 55.¹⁴³ The last cultic emphasis on the ideological coupling of Honos and Virtus reaches back to Marius, with his construction of a temple to Honos and Virtus on the Velia. Moreover, Honos and Virtus were not invoked again until Augustus, who also took an interest in the cult of Honos and Virtus, thus constituting a long and unnecessary eclipse of any patronage of Honos and Virtus. Caesar overtly appears to be the missing link in the patronage of Honos and Virtus. Therefore, it is not inconceivable to consider that Marius' religious ideology, which focused on political and martial values, was picked up by his nephew Caesar, who idolized Marius, before passing the baton of his political and martial ideologies down to Octavian, his heir. The cult images of Andreia as Virtus and Timē as Honos on the Monument of Gaius Julius Zoilos and the Caesarian colonies of Iulia Virtus and Iulia Iuvenalis Honoris et Virtutis Circa provide enough circumstantial evidence to conclude that he may have been affiliated by others with the cult of Honos and Virtus like his uncle Marius and Octavian were. That Caesar deliberately eschewed any explicit connection to Dea Virtus, just as he avoided appending *virtus* to himself in his *Commentarii*, is conceivable, since he believed that *virtus* had to be recognized by someone other than himself.

Caesar was a man of *virtus*; and having written his commentaries on the martial deeds which he executed while on campaign in Gaul and during the Civil Wars, he ascertained that his *virtus* was recognized by all. Caesar's perceptions of *virtus* and its military function are pivotal in his *Commentarii*, in which he established a codified system of martial principles concerning *virtus* that were applied on the battlefield. First and foremost, Caesar demonstrates that all men who engage in warfare possess *virtus*. The fact that men were risking their lives and engaging in courageous deeds of martial fortitude for a

¹⁴³ Although, since this was a multi-virtues shrine, no individual emphasis was really given to Honos and Virtus, who were only a part of Pompey's larger divine assemblage of personal virtues claimed. Cf. Fears 1981, 883-4.

greater concerted cause warranted *virtus*, i.e. their manliness that reflected their military duty as male citizens and guardians of Rome. However, according to Caesar, this characteristic was not limited to the Romans, but also applied to their adversaries, who were defenders of their own territories, and who had amassed their *virtus* in combat over time, just as the Roman did. Accordingly, Caesar constructed a social hierarchy in *virtus*, in which ranks in *virtus* were conferred on an individual or group that were tantamount to their martial aptitude. During warfare, every warrior on the battlefield possessed some variable amount of *virtus*, which correlated with his martial skills. Thus, not every warrior, nor army could have possessed the same capacity of *virtus*, or battles would result in a draw. He makes it clear that the *virtus* of one party must overpower the *virtus* of another, not only to obtain victory, but to also increase one's own capacity in *virtus*, which reinforces warriors' individual and collective confidence in their martial proficiency, contributing to their military efficacy in subsequent battles. Caesar conceived of every battle as a contest in *virtus* in which the *virtus* of one side will have been victorious, and the *virtus* of the other will have been defeated, i.e. the former acquired *virtus*, and the latter lost their *virtus* to the victors on the battlefield.

The reason for Caesar's conceptualization of a ranking system in *virtus* is transparent. Battle competitions between men on the battlefield were conducive to measuring the worth of one's masculinity in Rome's militaristic society. The metrics of Roman manliness were established by man's martial capacity on the battlefield, where every warrior had the potential to either prove and/or rank his worth in *virtus* by outperforming another in martial aptitude. This Roman military ideology explains the convergence of martial valor and manliness – the original meaning of *virtus*. In the framework of Roman warfare, martial valor is manliness, and manliness is martial valor. Possessing *virtus* qualified masculinity. And the way in which Roman men acquired *virtus*, or "manliness," was through martial competitions, between themselves or engaged with the enemy in either a single duel between individuals or in a comprehensive duel between martial factions. According to Sallust, and exemplified by Caesar's own forces, Roman soldiers individually competed in *virtus* for honor and glory, which constituted their martial currency, and

their individual value in *virtus*, i.e. their military worth. Similarly, the military elite also competed in battle for glory, but more explicitly for martial superiority. Their superiority in battle was systemically associated with their political standing, or *honos*, by which they vied with their political rivals for political primacy in Rome, including Marcellus, Marius, Pompey, and Caesar, who all recognized and understood the symbiotic, ideological relationship between *honos* and *virtus*. As for competitions concerning Rome's adversaries, Caesar identified the ways in which attributing *virtus* – a Roman quality of pride and distinction – to Rome's enemies would benefit the Romans who battled against them. Caesar implies that the greater an enemy's martial value or worth, the more difficult the military contest; and the more challenging the enemy was to defeat, the greater their *virtus* was considered to be. Since *virtus* was considered a coveted characteristic that was obtained on the battlefield and maintained over time, Caesar understood that the greater the enemies' *virtus* was, the more distinct it was considered by the Romans, and the more valuable it was to attain, since *virtus* contributed to a commanding general's political leverage, glory, and fame. Moreover, Caesar makes it clear that *virtus* ushers in victory. When the Roman *imperator* defeated his enemies in battle, his own *virtus* was conceptualized to be the bringer of *victoria*.

Caesar maintains that *virtus* needed to be witnessed on the battlefield and, therefore, acknowledged by fellow soldiers, comrades, or officers for that *virtus* to engender martial glory. Without acknowledgment of *virtus*, the credibility of a man's reputation was jeopardized. The fact that displays of *virtus* had to be witnessed is closely associated with the greater recognition of *virtus* by the general public, whose primary concern was the perpetuity of their legacy. Caesar asserts that *virtus* is the bringer of *salus*, or safety and security, to the people of Rome. This was a principal characteristic of the military and of its general to maintain, without which the safety and security of the people, as well as the continuity of their civilization could not be guaranteed. Therefore, the *virtus* of the *imperator* was an imperative virtue to the people, who validated his reputation, respectability, and his worth as the leader of the world.

Caesar's considerable employment of *virtus* in his *Commentarii* makes it vividly clear that he was attentive to his self-image in *virtus* as a reflection of both the *virtus* of his soldiers, whose martial talents contributed to Caesar's military success on the battlefield, as well as the *virtus* of his enemies, without which he would not have been able to lay the foundations of his reputation in martial excellence – his own *virtus* – upon which he could construct his political career as proclaimed *imperator*, consul five times, and *dictator* of Rome – his *honor*. And although Caesar meticulously avoided explicitly appending *virtus* to himself due to the fact that he considered the recognition of *virtus* by others to be the true manifestation of *virtus*, Caesar still ascertained that his own *virtus* was, in other ways, perceptible, lest his military accomplishments as commander of the Roman army be neglected. Caesar's *Commentarii* were his initial attempt to publicize his reputation in martial valor; however, Caesar was aware that, even if the literate patrician class of Romans recognized his *virtus* from his literary magnum opus, he would have still needed to project his reputation in *virtus* to a wider audience if he ever were to achieve universal renown. Therefore, beginning in 49, Caesar minted a series of coins to commemorate his political accomplishments and military achievements.¹⁴⁴ Moreover, Caesar's quadripartite triumph in 46 also served as a calculated visual exhibition of his *virtus*, which manifested itself in the forms of paraded *spolia*, commissioned allegorical statues of subjugated provinces, throngs of barbarian prisoners, displays of the enemies' armor rendered as Caesar's trophies, and which culminated with Caesar himself, dressed in a *toga picta*, and mounted on a chariot of victory as *triumphator* of Rome, guided by his *virtus*.

Caesar's political and martial ideologies that governed his administration set the stage for a new world order in the political landscape of Rome: autocracy through supremacy in politics and war. Greatly influenced by the political and military reputations of Rome's most distinguished generals of the Roman Republic, e.g. Marcellus, Marius, Pompey, and many others who exploited a political system that

¹⁴⁴ E.g. *RRC* 452 (*BMCR* 3955), *RRC* 468 (*BMCR* Spain 86), *RRC* 480 (*BMCR* 4157).

incentivized military performance by awarding Rome's highest magisterial positions to those with the greatest capacity in martial experience, Caesar consolidated Rome's armies under his command. Consequently, he consolidated his soldiers' concerted *virtus* as a reflection of his own, thereby monopolizing *virtus* for himself for the sake of military superiority, which none could possibly challenge. His ascent to political primacy through his martial exploits set a precedent for the subsequent emperors of Rome, namely that the key to sustaining absolute authority was through *virtus*.

Conscious of the fact that his political success hinged on the evaluation of his martial faculties, Caesar intentionally exploited his *virtus* to win over the people, thereby triggering a transaction between Caesar and the senate and people of Rome. Since, *virtus* was, according to Caesar, the bringer of *salus*, in return for the assurance of the safety and security of Rome, the Roman people, having found their champion, validated his *virtus* and crystallized his competency as Rome's one and only needed *imperator*. Without the support of the people, including the Roman army, Caesar understood that he would have lost his credibility and the reins of his supreme power; for he recognized that *honor* could not be supported without *virtus*. However, Caesar received the *magnum imperium* he so restlessly desired in exchange for his *virtus* that guaranteed the continuity of peace and prosperity in Rome. His immutable reputation in *honor* and *virtus* was stitched into the fabric of Rome's collective consciousness, having deflected a disgraceful death by his eternal glory and resounding fame. And after his assassination, Caesar received *virtus*' ultimate reward – the gift of immortality. Rising from the ashes of his adoptive father's *imperium*, Octavian apotheosized his adoptive father, whose indelible legacy in politics and war he placed among the shooting stars.

Chapter III

Virtus Augusti:

Dea Virtus and the Julio-Claudian Emperors

III.I: The Virtus of Octavian

*In my sixth and seventh consulship, after I dissolved the civil wars, and after I was in charge of all affairs, with given universal consent, I transferred the Republic from my power to the authority of the senate and the people of Rome. On behalf of my gesture, by the decree of the senate, I was named 'Augustus,' and the posts of my house were adorned by the public with laurels, and a civic crown, which was hung above my door, and a golden shield was also set up in the Curia Julia, which the senate and the people of Rome gave to me on account of my clemency, my justice, my piety, and my 'virtus.'*¹

-Augustus, *Res Gestae* 34.

When the senators of Rome met for session on the 13th of January, 27 BCE, after Octavian concluded the civil wars with his victory over Antony and Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium, and after he claimed to have reinstated the power of the senate and the people of Rome over the Republic, the senate conferred the honorific title of "Augustus" on Octavian and established a golden shield in the Curia Julia inscribed with four personal virtues intrinsic to Augustus' ideological identity: *clementia*, *iustitia*, *pietas*, and *virtus*.² A marble copy of the shield, known as the *clipeus virtutis*, substantiates this benefaction and preserves the original senatorial inscription: "the senate and the Roman people gave to the *imperator* Caesar Augustus, son of a god, consul eight times, a shield of *virtus*, of *clementia*, of *iustitia*, and of *pietas* towards the gods and the fatherland" (Fig. 26)³

¹ *In consulatu sexto et septimo, postquam bella civilia exstinxeram, per consensum universorum potitus rerum omnium, rem publicam ex mea potestate in senatus populique Romani arbitrium transtuli. Quo pro merito meo senatus consulto Augustus appellatus sum et laureis postes aedium mearum vestiti publice coronaque civica super ianuam meam fixa est et clipeus aureus in curia Iulia positus, quem mihi senatum populumque Romanum dare virtutis clementiaeque et iustitiae et pietatis caussa testatum est per eius clupeus inscriptionem.*

² Aug. RG 34; Galinsky 1996, 80.

³ *SENATVS POPVLVSQVE ROMANVS IMP CAESARI DIVI F AVGVSTO COS VIII DEDIT CLVPEVM VIRTUTIS CLEMENTIAE IVSTITIAE PIETATIS ERGA DEOS PATRIAMQVE.* Cf. also Zanker 1988, 95-8.



Figure 26: A copy of the clipeus virtutis given to Octavian in 27 BCE.

The quality *virtus* inscribed on the *clipeus virtutis*, as well as the shield itself, represented Augustus' *virtus militaris*, or the martial valor earned by Augustus as *imperator* of the Roman armies, during his extensive military career.⁴ Moreover, the physical placement of the *clipeus virtutis* in proximity to the altar and statue of Victoria, which Augustus erected in the Curia Julia after his victory at Actium, reinforced the viewer's understanding of *virtutis* inscribed on the shield as a cardinal military attribute of the *imperator*.⁵ In his *Res Gestae*, however, Augustus abstains from ascribing *virtus* to himself just as Caesar abstained from claiming *virtus* for himself in his *de Bello Gallico*. For, Augustus was certainly conscious of Caesar's martial prescript in his commentaries, namely that *virtus* must be earned in warfare and recognized by others in order for it to be considered valid.⁶ And, indeed, in 27, the senate officially acknowledged Augustus' *virtus*, thereby permitting the *princeps* to promote his military accomplishments without having to claim the quality *virtus* for himself.

In order to attain a martial reputation and earn the respect of the Roman people, as well as of Rome's military, Augustus recognized, as early as at the age of 18, while he campaigned with Caesar in Spain in 45, that *virtus* was a necessary acquisition for a military leader, especially if he desired to run the *cursus honorum*.⁷ Even before Caesar's death, both Caesar and the young Octavian knew that *virtus* could not be constructed for Octavian on the shoulders of Caesar's martial legacy, but rather on the bedrock of his own martial exploits, which Caesar attempted to foster not only by taking Octavian with him to Spain, but also by sending Octavian to Apollonia in 44 BCE with the intention of taking him on several planned

⁴ Galinsky 1996, 82.

⁵ *Fasti Maffeiani* for the twenty-eighth of August, 29; *Fasti Vaticanani* for the twenty-eighth of August, 29; Dio 51.22; Zanker 1988, 97; Galinsky 1996, 82-3.

⁶ See Chapter II.III.

⁷ Vell. Pat. 2.59.

campaigns on the eastern front against the Getae and the Parthians.⁸ However, Caesar was killed before he could cultivate his great nephew's martial training. After Caesar's death, Octavian took the name "Caesar" for himself and assumed his adoptive father's military responsibilities as commander of two defected Caesarian legions, the Legio Martia and the Legio IV Macedonica, as well as an army of Caesarian veterans.⁹ Octavian had no choice but to acquire a reputation in *virtus*, even if temporarily superficial, in order to distinguish himself from Antony, who was consular general at the time, and who already possessed a creditable record in *res militaris*.

In January of 43, having granted *imperium* and propraetorian powers to Octavian ten years before he had even reached the minimum age requirement, the senate approved an equestrian statue of Octavian next to the *rostra* in the forum. This gilded statue of Octavian stood as an unquestionable monument of Octavian's *virtus* and leadership, even before he had earned them.¹⁰ Even though Octavian had neither held political office, nor led an army, this senatorial gesture linked Octavian's promising political career, his *honor*, to his promising military career, his *virtus*.¹¹ And this is exactly the kind of premature recognition Octavian needed in order to compete against Antony for the attention of the Roman people, without whose support he never would have been able to establish his own political legacy, predicated on his *virtus militaris*.

In April of 43, Octavian finally found his chance to exercise his military leadership and prove his *virtus*, when he pursued Antony at the town of Mutina.¹² On the 21st of April, Octavian's forces assailed the Antonians at Mutina, pushing through to the last man in a violent and bloody battle.¹³ According to Appian, Octavian and his forces valiantly rushed into Antony's camp, to retrieve the body of the consular

⁸ Vell. Pat. 2.59.

⁹ Vell. Pat. 2.61; Suet. *Caes.* 7; Cic. *Phil.* 3.39, 11.20; 14.31; *Fam.* 10.28.3, 11.7.2; *Att.* 16.8.2; Zanker 1988, 37-8.

¹⁰ Zanker 1988, 39.

¹¹ Vell. Pat. 2.61; *Fasti Praenestini* for January 7th, 43; Zanker 1988, 38; Cooley 2003, 47.

¹² App. *BC* 3.9.65-7; Dio 46.35; Plut. *Ant.* 17.

¹³ Ovid (*Fasti* 4.625) gives the day of the fourteenth of April.

general Hirtius. Whether or not Appian's testimony is credible, Octavian's leadership and proactive participation in battle are demonstrative of his courage in battle.¹⁴ Octavian won his first military victory and was, subsequently, hailed as *imperator*.¹⁵ This was the first time, of his 21 times, according to the *Res Gestae*, in which Octavian was named *imperator* by his legions – a significant title which he needed to obtain to advance his martial reputation.¹⁶

In order for Octavian to publicize the news of his inaugural political and martial achievements, he minted his first series of coins featuring his image beginning in 43 (Fig. 27). The obverse depicts a young profile of Octavian with the legend *C[aius] CAESAR IMP[ERATOR]*, and Octavian on



Figure 27: Denarius of Octavian as imperator. Ca. 43 BCE.

horseback on the reverse, with the legend *S[ENATUS] C[ONSULTUM]* in the exergue, most likely modeled after his gilded equestrian statue erected in the forum by the senate. He is dressed in armor and raises his right arm out in front of him, signaling an *adlocutio* as if he were formally addressing his troops.¹⁷ That Octavian was concerned over the legitimization of his martial competency as soon as he was named Caesar's testamentary heir is incontrovertible, evidenced by his new title *imperator* minted on the obverse of his coins, as well as his image depicted in the guise of the next great military leader, modeled after the equestrian images of Sulla, Pompey, and Caesar before him, on the reverse.

Unfortunately for Octavian, the senate did not recognize him as victor at Mutina and attempted to coerce his forces to abandon their commander. Disenchanted by the senate's affront against Octavian,

¹⁴ Appi. *BC* 3.9.71.

¹⁵ App. *BC* 3.9.67-71; Vell. Pat. 2.61; Plut. *Ant.* 17; Dio 46.38; Ovid *Fasti* 4.673-6; *CIL* 10.8375.

¹⁶ Aug. *RG* 4.

¹⁷ *RRC* 490.1.3 (Crawford 1974, 499); *BMCRR* Gaul 81; Zanker 1988, 37-8.

the Caesarian legions refused the senate's demands, and remained loyal to their *imperator*.¹⁸ It was unfortunate that Octavian was deliberately denied recognition for his martial role at Mutina since, according to Cassius Dio, he coveted the political office of consul, believing that undertaking this very war would have made him consul, that *honor* was the prize of *virtus*.¹⁹ Unfortunately for Octavian, his martial bravery at Mutina was discounted by the senate; however, Cicero proposed to award an *ovatio* to Octavian for his military efforts, even though the proposition was rejected.²⁰ Although a triumph would have secured a higher political appointment for him, Octavian would have to find another way of obtaining *honor* as consul, since his *virtus* at Mutina went officially unrecognized.

In the summer of 43, feeling rebuffed by the senate, Octavian sent an envoy of centurions to Rome to demand that he be elected consul for the following year.²¹ The senate rejected Octavian's demand on the basis that he was too young and inexperienced to hold this *honor*. He, therefore, crossed the Rubicon and marched on Rome.²² When he arrived in August, no one dared to challenge his forces. And on the 19th of August, he was elected consul for the first time – the *honor* granted to him not by the will of the senate, but rather by the military authority of his armies, who recognized his martial worth.²³

Despite having obtained the consulship for 42 and being in command of several legionary forces, Octavian still loomed in the shadow of Caesar. Moreover, Octavian was set to administer a fractured senate, a fractured people, and a fractured country, engaged in civil strife. If Octavian desired to step into the limelight of political and military supremacy, he would have to unify the country – a political enterprise which Caesar was unable to do. Such an achievement would surely distinguish his own career from

¹⁸ App. *BC* 3.74; Vell. Pat. 2.62; Dio 46.40.

¹⁹ Dio 46.41-2.

²⁰ Cic. *ad Brut.* 1.15.9.

²¹ App. *BC* 3.87. Suet. (*Aug.* 26) reports that, when the senate neglected to obey Octavian's demand, one of his centurions drew his sword from its hilt and threatened the senators if they did not reconsider. Dio (46.43-4) reports a similar anecdote, but states that Octavian was present at the time.

²² App. *BC* 3.88.

²³ Suet. *Aug.* 26; Dio 46.44-6; App. *BC* 3.94.

Caesar's. If he could also eliminate Brutus and Cassius and quell the civil wars, thereby ensuring peace in Rome, the legacies of the greatest *imperatores* of Rome would be eclipsed by no one else's but his own. In order to achieve his political ambitions, however, Octavian first had to amend his relationship with Antony; for, he needed Antony's military assistance in eradicating Brutus and Cassius.²⁴

The Lex Titia, established on the 27th of November, 43, decreed that Lepidus, Antony, and Octavian would serve as a tripartite board of appointees on behalf of the Republic, who, together, held consular *imperium*, and the power to appoint new magistrates for a period of five years.²⁵ With access to Antony's armies, Octavian was better prepared to wage war against the conspirators Brutus and Cassius in avenging Caesar's death. Before meeting Brutus and Cassius on the battlefield at Philippi in October of 42, Octavian vowed to construct a temple to Mars Ultor, the avenger, if he should be victorious.²⁶ Similar to the vows pledged by Marcellus to the goddess Virtus before the Battle at Clastidium and before the Battle of Syracuse, Octavian brokered a martial deal with the god of war in exchange for victory in warfare. With a victory over the conspirators and enemies of Rome, Octavian knew that he would not again be snubbed by the senate from receiving praise awarded for his military leadership.

However, the battles at Philippi did not produce the results for which Octavian had hoped. During the first battle at Philippi, Brutus' armies decimated Octavian's wing of the triumviral legions and captured Octavian's camp.²⁷ Although he did not demonstrate outstanding *virtus* on the battlefield at Philippi, he was, nevertheless, a participant as commanding general and received what he desired, suggested by

²⁴ App. *BC* 3.96.

²⁵ Dio 46.51-5, 47.2; Plut. *Ant.* 19; App. *BC* 4.7; Levick 2010, 31; Richardson 2012, 34.

²⁶ Suet. *Aug.* 29; Ovid *Fasti* 5.569.

²⁷ Plut. *Brut.* 43-53; App. *BC* 4.101-38; Dio 47.35-49; *Fasti Praenestini* fo October twenty-third; Scott 1933, 22; Richardson 2012, 41.

having the decapitated head of Brutus purportedly thrown at the base of Caesar's statue, and by fulfilling his vow to Mars Ultor, albeit 40 years later.²⁸

After the Battle of Philippi in 42, both Antony and Octavian minted several martial-themed coins whose iconography would have propagated his victory. On the obverse of Octavian's denarii, the bearded profile of a youthful Octavian is framed by the legends CAESAR and III VIR R[EI] P[VBLIVAE] C[ONSTITVENDAE] (Fig. 28).²⁹



Figure 28: Denarius of Octavian at triumvir on the obverse and Mars Ultor on the reverse. Ca. 42 BCE.

The reverse depicts a representation of a statue of Mars. Crowned by a Corinthian helmet with a crest, Mars rests on a spear in his right hand and holds a sword in his left.³⁰ The image of Mars may have been Octavian's original vision for the cult statue of Mars Ultor for his vowed temple.

Not only did Octavian's moneyers mint images of gods in association with Octavian, but they also minted Octavian's personified virtues of the time. In the same year, the moneyer L. Regulus minted a series of denarii featuring the profile of Augustus on the obverse and



Figure 29: Denarius of Octavian on the obverse and Victoria on the reverse. Ca. 42 BCE.

Victoria on the reverse (Fig. 29).³¹ Victoria, winged, carries a palm in her left hand and proffers a laurel wreath with her right. Octavian's part in the Battle of Philippi was officially recognized with this series and published as a victory for which he could take credit.³²

²⁸ Suet. *Aug.* 13; *Contra Dio* (47-9), who states that the head was thrown into the sea; Plut. *Brut.* 53.2; App. *BC* 4.135; Richardson 2012, 41.

²⁹ "The triumvirate for the establishment of the Republic:" *RRC* 494.18 (Crawford 1974, 505); *BMCRR* Rome 4279.

³⁰ The legend on the reverse names the moneyer *P. CLODIVS M. f.*, "Publius Clodius, son of Marcus."

³¹ *RRC* 494.25 (Crawford 1974, 506); *RR1* 4260 (Grueber 1970, 580); *BMCRR* Rome 4260.

³² This is also the first time in which Victoria is associated with Octavian in the visual arts.

Victoria was not the only Virtue with which Octavian was associated. The moneyer C. Vibius Varus minted, in the same year, another issue of denarii featuring a bearded Octavian on the obverse and Fortuna on the reverse (**Fig. 30**).³³ Fortuna is identified by the abundant cornucopia she wields in the crook of her left arm, as well as the victoriola which alights on her right hand. The visual message is clear: fortune, rather than *virtus*, bore victory to Octavian



Figure 30: Denarius of Octavian with Fortuna on the reverse. Ca. 42 BCE.

against Brutus and Cassius. This is reasonable; for, there is no *virtus* to be earned in civil war, Roman against Roman.

Lastly, Octavian's moneyer P. Clodius, also minted a series of denarii featuring the profile of a beardless Octavian on the obverse, and, on the reverse, Pietas, identified by the branch in her right hand and a scepter in her left (**Fig. 31**).³⁴ This was the first time in which personified virtues, Fortuna, Victoria, and Pietas were identified as personal characteristics of Octavian. The image of Pietas may have alluded to the filial duty of Octavian



Figure 31: Denarius of Octavian with Pietas on the reverse. Ca. 42 BCE.

as Caesar's heir, as well as to his duty to avenge his father's death against Brutus and Cassius, according to Crawford.³⁵ In any case, the *pietas* of Octavian was officially recognized by the senate and the Roman people in 27 when the *clipeus virtutis* was dedicated. By 42, Octavian had already acquired his first visual assemblage of Virtues, minted on the reverses of his coins, and circulated among the public.

After a brief escalation between Octavian and Antony in 40, the triumvirs conferred at Brundisium to renegotiate concord between Octavian, Antony, and Lepidus; and to solidify their harmony,

³³ RRC 494.33 (Crawford 1974, 507); BMCRR Rome 4293.

³⁴ RRC 494.19 (Crawford 1974, 505); BMCRR 4282. Similar to the coins of Pietas (labeled) minted by in 45/4 BCE, cf. RRC 477.

³⁵ Crawford 1974, 510.

Octavia was wedded to Antony.³⁶ In order to propagandize triumviral unity, Antony and Octavian minted a series of quinarii featuring the image of Concordia on the obverse, and, on the reverse, two clasped hands superimposed on a caduceus and framed by the legend *M. ANTON C. CAESAR* (Fig. 32).



Figure 32: Quinarius of Octavian and Antony with Concordia on the obverse and clasped hands on the reverse. Ca. 40 BCE.

The harmonious iconography demonstrated to the world that Antony's and Octavian's civil feud had come to an end.³⁷ And *concordia* was added to Octavian's collection of recognized virtues.

A diplomatic victory may not have come with the same glory and renown awarded to a triumphal general after a victory in warfare; however, peace acquired through diplomatic victory may have been perceived as civil war's equivalent to peace acquired through a military victory, suggested by the senate's decision to grant an *ovatio* to both Antony and Octavian.³⁸ Little is known about the ceremony of this particular *ovatio*; however, Dio remarks that, during the celebrations, Octavian and Antony entered Rome mounted on horseback. They arrived in triumphal dress as if they were in triumph, rendering this *ovatio* an early *adventus* – an imperial conceptualization of a victorious arrival into Rome first officially appearing on the coinage of Trajan.³⁹ Although this *ovatio* may have only offered reassurance to the people that Rome was no longer teetering on the brink of yet another civil war, the *ovatio* was, nevertheless, executed as if it were a military triumph, giving the public the impression that Octavian was a man of *virtus*, and, therefore, a restorer of peace.⁴⁰ However content the Roman people were about the triumviral reconciliation, their sentiments were, nevertheless, countered by their dissatisfaction with the triumvirs'

³⁶ Plut. *Ant.* 30-1; App. *BC* 5.65-6; Dio 48.38-9; Lange 2016, 157-8; Southern 2014, 130-3; Richardson 2012, 52-3; Levick 2010, 36; Osgood 2006, 188-90; Ward et al. 2003, 222-3.

³⁷ *RRC* 529.4b (Crawford 1974, 532); *BMCRR* East 128; Osgood 2006, 190-1.

³⁸ Suet. *Aug.* 22; Dio 48.31; Osgood 2006, 191. The *Fasti Triumphales* record that the *ovatio* was awarded to Octavian because he had made peace with Antony: *Fasti Triumphales* for 40: *IMP CAESAR DIVI F C F III VIR R[EI] P[VBLICAE] C[ONSTITVENDAE] OV[ANS] AN. DCCXIII] QVOD PACEM CUM M ANTONIO FECIT.*

³⁹ Dio 48.31; Lange 2016, 114-5, 156-7. On the triumphal *adventus*, see below.

⁴⁰ Dio 48.31.

move against Sextus Pompey, governor of Sicily, who was still popular in Rome among those who favored his conservative Republican ideology.⁴¹

When relations with Sextus Pompey had begun to unravel after Octavian had swiftly divorced Scribonia – the aunt of the wife of Sextus Pompey – and after Sextus Pompey resumed his maritime blockade of the grain supply to Italy, Octavian, once again, found himself on the brink of another civil war despite the signing of their peace treaty at Misenum in 39.⁴² By 38, Octavian attempted to invade Sicily on his own, albeit with no success. For, Sextus Pompey had destroyed two of Octavian's fleets in the Strait of Messina, leaving Octavian's ego bruised and his reputation battered.⁴³ Octavian had no choice but to retreat. Knowing that he would not be able to defeat Sextus Pompey alone, Octavian summoned Agrippa from Gaul and requested additional assistance from Antony, who was in the east planning his invasion of Parthia, while, at this time, courting the Egyptian queen, Cleopatra. Antony, nevertheless, promised to bring 120 ships, albeit begrudgingly; and Octavian, in return, promised to send 20,000 troops to Antony for his impending campaigns against the Parthians.⁴⁴ While Agrippa was charged with the construction of ships for Octavian's Sicilian expedition, Octavian, Antony, and Lepidus convened at Tarentum in the summer of 37 where they agreed to renew the triumvirate for another five-year term.⁴⁵

By the summer of 36, the ships which Agrippa was constructing were ready. Octavian, Antony and Agrippa mounted a tripartite naval assault on Sextus Pompey, who was stationed at Messana. While Agrippa engaged with Sextus Pompey's fleet at Mylae, Octavian did not let this chance for war get away, according to Dio, and besieged the east-coast town of Tauromenium, but failed to capture it.⁴⁶ He, then,

⁴¹ Dio 48.31; App. *BC* 5.25.

⁴² Vell. Pat. 2.77; Plut. *Ant.* 31.1; Dio 48.36; Appian *BC* 5.67-72; Southern 2014, 133-8; Richardson 2012, 53-4; Levick 2010, 36-9; Ward et al. 2003, 223-4.

⁴³ App. *BC* 5.81-90; Richardson 2012, 55; Ward et al. 2003, 224-5.

⁴⁴ However, Antony would never receive the forces he was promised: App. *BC* 5.92-5; Plut. *Ant.* 35; Richardson 2012, 56; Ward et al. 2003, 225.

⁴⁵ App. *BC* 5.95; Dio 48.49, 54; Vell. Pat. 2.79; *Fasti Capitolini* for 37; Southern 2014, 140; Levick 2010, 39;

⁴⁶ App. *BC* 5.106-12; Dio 49.1-2; Vell. Pat. 2.79.

decided to engage in a sea-battle with Sextus Pompey off the coast; however, much to his chagrin, Octavian's ships were devastated by Pompey's superior naval forces. Having suffered a paralyzing defeat, Octavian narrowly escaped with his life.⁴⁷ Humiliated, Octavian mobilized his land forces and rushed his forces to Mylae where he joined Agrippa and the rest of his fleet. On the 3rd of September, the maritime theatre of war was brought to Naulochus, where Octavian's fleet, under Agrippa's command, decisively defeated Sextus Pompey, who fled to the east.⁴⁸

Even though the success at Naulochus was doubtless earned by Agrippa and his experience in military tactics, Octavian, nevertheless, took full credit for this naval victory.⁴⁹ Rife with successive military failures, which added nothing to his list of accomplishments, Octavian desperately needed a success story if he were ever going to compete with a living Antony and a dead Caesar over military supremacy in Rome. After paying his armies, reinforcing their allegiance, Octavian returned to Rome and delivered several speeches, subsequently published in propagandistic pamphlets, which recounted his military exploits in Sicily in order to promote his victory over Sextus Pompey at Naulochus.⁵⁰ He proclaimed that he ushered in peace and good fortune for ending the civil wars under the pretense that this war was necessary to restore harmony in Rome.⁵¹ Moreover, Octavian remitted taxes levied for his naval war, abolished the debt of farmers and land owners owed to the state, and publicly refused to accept the title of Pontifex Maximus, which was currently held by Lepidus, in an attempt to rehabilitate his waning influence in Rome.⁵² Nevertheless, Octavian was persuasive, and his resilience in warfare must have been impressive.

⁴⁷ App. *BC* 5.106-12; Dio 49.1-2; Southern 2014, 142

⁴⁸ Livy *Per.* 129; Vell. Pat. 2.79-82; App. *BC* 5.114-21; Dio 49.8-10; Richardson 2012; 57; Ward et al. 2003, 225.

⁴⁹ App. *BC* 5.121.

⁵⁰ App. *BC* 5.130. Lange (2016, 158-9) conjectures that the speeches were made outside of the pomerium, possibly in the area of the Campus Martius or the Circus Flaminius.

⁵¹ App. *BC* 5.130; Cornwell 2017, 92.

⁵² App. *BC* 5.130-1; Dio 49.14; Levick 2010, 40-1.

The senate voted Octavian an innumerable list of honors, including limited tribunician powers, and an *ovatio*, his second.⁵³

On the day of Octavian's *ovatio* in November of 36, the people met the victor outside of Rome, opposite the *pomerium*, and escorted Octavian into the city. Octavian was allowed to wear the laurel crown and to enter the city on horseback, thereby rendering this another early triumphal *adventus*.⁵⁴ After proceeding through the city, possibly through the Porta Triumphalis, as suggested by Lange, in order to make his *ovatio* appear as triumphal as possible, Octavian paused at several unspecified temples, which must have included the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline.⁵⁵ Moreover, according to Dio, Octavian was also granted a triumphal arch bearing trophies (*ἀψῖδά τε τροπαιοφόρον*).⁵⁶ Unfortunately, there is no other extant evidence, literary or archaeological, which lends credence to Dio's assertion. This gesture may have been one repudiated by Octavian, since, in the same account, Dio states that Octavian refused some of the conferred honors. That Octavian rejected the construction of a triumphal monument bearing the armor and weapons of his defeated enemies was a reasonable judgment, since his enemies were fellow Roman citizens at a time of internal strife. Moreover, because a *tropaeum* physically stood as a visual testament to his *virtus* gained in warfare after defeating a foreign enemy, not after defeating other Roman citizens, even if they were deemed enemies of the state during civil war, the monument would have been more polarizing and divisive during this time of disunity and discord. The visual significance of a trophy-bearing arch would have been inappropriate and offensive for Octavian's message of unity and peace among all Romans.

⁵³ App *BC* 5.130; Dio 49.15-16; Suet. *Aug.* 22. Tribunician powers were not granted for life, as Appian falsely reported (*BC* 5.132), but he did receive the right to a seat on the tribune's bench, according to Dio (40.15.5-6).

⁵⁴ *Fasti Triumphales* for 44; Dio 44.4; Lange 2016, 158.

⁵⁵ Dio's passage at 49.15 suggests that Octavian may have visited the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline during his *ovatio*; and if so, Octavian most likely dedicated the victory laurels. Cf. also App. *BC* 130; Lange 2016, 158.

⁵⁶ Dio 49.15.

Octavian, however, had no problem accepting the construction of a victory column, decorated with the *rostra* of the defeated ships (*columna rostrata*) during the battle at Naulochus. The column was also surmounted by a gilded statue of the victor himself, depicted as he entered the city during his *ovatio*.⁵⁷ According to Appian, the inscription of the column read: “He [Octavian] restored peace, in turmoil for a long time, on land and sea.”⁵⁸ The column was a much more suitable propagandistic monument than a triumphal arch, which inherently demonstrated allusions to personal *virtus* acquired in foreign war, whereas the *columna rostrata* better represented the collective *pax terra marique* reconstituted by Octavian for the benefit of the people – a message Octavian had striven to convey to the people of Rome throughout his lifetime as *conservator pacis publicae*.

Bereft of the *virtus* he needed to consolidate both his military and political power, thereby initiating a true *pax Romana*, Octavian still needed a decisive victory in a foreign war in order to give the impression that he himself had terminated all existing threats to the welfare of the *patria* beyond her borders. Therefore, he turned his attention toward Illyricum (Dalmatia) in 35 for no other reason than attempting to elicit *virtus* from a foreign enemy.⁵⁹ As Dio rightly states, a war waged in Illyricum was unnecessary, since its inhabitants bore no ill-will against Octavian, nor did they threaten the security of Rome. However, Octavian wished to “train his soldiers and let them practice soldiering against foreign people, for he considered every act against the weaker to be customary since it is befitting to the one superior in arms.”⁶⁰ That Octavian had no pressing reason to invade Illyricum except to fortify the *virtus* of his army (and, by proxy, himself) is transparent from this passage. Dio emphasizes that Octavian desired to improve his soldiers’ military skills in battle, which will have easily been accomplished in battle against a weaker enemy. That is to say the greater *virtus* of his Roman army could be further strengthened when

⁵⁷ Cornwell 2017, 93.

⁵⁸ App. *BC* 5.130: τὴν εἰρήνην ἐστασιασμένην ἐκ πολλοῦ συνέστησε κατὰ τε γῆν καὶ θάλασσαν.

⁵⁹ For Octavian’s campaigns in Illyricum, see App. *Illyr.* 16-28; Dio 49.34-8, 43.8.

⁶⁰ Dio 49.36: τοὺς στρατιώτας ἀσκή τε ἄμα καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἀλλοτρίων τρέφῃ πᾶν τὸ τῷ κρείττονι τοῖς ὅπλοις ἀρέσκον δίκαιον ἐς τοὺς ἀσθενεστέρους ποιούμενος.

exercised in warfare against the Dalmatian enemy who possessed inferior *virtus*, or rather, a *virtus* not considered great enough to overcome the Romans. This anecdote is akin to Caesar's treatment of ranking and comparing the *virtus* of the barbarians against the *virtus* of the Romans throughout *de Bello Gallico*.⁶¹ For Octavian had learned from his adoptive father's excessive campaigns in Gaul that there was no clearer path to martial glory and universal renown than acquiring *virtus* in war, necessary or unnecessary, against formidable foreign foes. And if he were going to compete in martial superiority against Antony, who was already in the midst of launching his own unnecessary war against the Parthians in the east, Octavian had little choice but to invade Illyricum.⁶² Fortunately for Octavian, his campaign against Illyricum came with a scapegoat, which facilitated the public approval of this needless war: its inhabitants had attacked Tergeste (Trieste), defeated the general Aulus Gabinius, and captured his army's military standards.⁶³ Vengeance seems to have emboldened Octavian to seek military conflict, as the Battle of Philippi had proved; and avenging the lost standards must have given him the impetus to campaign in Illyricum – an honorable deed of repatriation that would have bolstered his martial stature in Rome.

In 35, Octavian attacked the Iapydes and besieged their stronghold of Metulum on the Calapis River (Kolpa). Then he moved on Segesta (Sisak) and destroyed the town. After conquering the Iapydes, Octavian attacked the Dalmatae and laid siege to their town of Promoda and Synodium, near to where Aulus Gabinius had lost the standards.⁶⁴ In 33, the Dalmatae surrendered to Octavian and handed over the pilfered standards, which he deposited in the Porticus Octaviae.⁶⁵ Having been injured twice on the battlefield in his campaigns in Illyricum, having subjugated a foreign people, having extended the borders of Rome to the Danube River, and having restored the stolen standards, Octavian was able to prove to his

⁶¹ See chapter II.III.

⁶² Vell. Pat. 2.59; Suet. *Iul.* 44.3, *Aug. RG* 8; App. *BC* 2.110; Southern 2014, 148; Richardson 2012, 64.

⁶³ App. *Illyr.* 10.29, *BC* 3.12, 15, 18; Dio 49.36; Southern 2014, 148; Richardson 2012, 65.

⁶⁴ Octavian was granted a triumph after defeating the Iapydes in 35; however, he deferred the honor in order to reprise his role as commanding general in an unfinished campaign: Dio 49.38.

⁶⁵ App. *Illyr.* 10.17-28; *Aug. RG* 29; Southern 2014, 149-50.

armies that he could sustain his title as *imperator* as a successful military commander.⁶⁶ Unfortunately, his victories in Illyricum failed to gain the attention of the Roman people, which was overshadowed by the events occurring in the east, under the auspices of Antony, fueling Octavian's ardent desire to eliminate the last man obstructing his path to *virtus*, martial fame, and glory.

Antony's cavorting with Cleopatra presented Octavian with the opportunity to undertake one last civil conflict against Antony, under the pretense of a war against a foreign queen, whose defeat would present the *virtus* Octavian needed to prove his worth as sole *imperator* and sole defender of Rome.⁶⁷ In pursuit of political and military supremacy of Rome himself, Antony decided that the influence, might, manpower, and wealth Cleopatra possessed in the east was all he needed to expunge Octavian from the annals of Rome. His intentions to sever political ties with Italy were already clear by 34, when, after he invaded and conquered Armenia, he granted himself a triumph and held it, not in Rome, but in Alexandria, which insulted the Romans.⁶⁸ After riding into Alexandria on horseback and offering to the Egyptian queen the spoils of war, Antony nominated Cleopatra as "Queen of Kings," and her son Caesarion, son of Caesar, "King of Kings," and donated to them Egypt and Cyprus respectively. To his own children by Cleopatra, he donated Syria and Phoenicia to Ptolemy Philadelphus, Cyrene to Cleopatra Selene, and Armenia, Media, and Parthia to Alexander Helios.⁶⁹ Whether or not the reports by Plutarch and Dio on the "Donations of Alexandria" are credible is irrelevant; however, what Octavian and the rest of Rome did learn was that Cleopatra's influence over Antony was unwavering. Many feared the rumors that, now with half of Rome's armies behind her, Cleopatra was a genuine threat to their existence – a foreign despot, who was plotting to fetter Rome. When the tenure of the triumvirate expired in 33, both Octavian and Antony were no longer tethered by civil accord; and Antony made the mistake of confirming the people's fears about the

⁶⁶ Aug. *RG* 30.

⁶⁷ Plut. *Ant.* 36; Dio 49.34.

⁶⁸ Plut. *Ant.* 50; Dio 49.40; Ward et al. 2003, 227.

⁶⁹ Dio 49.41; Plut. *Ant.* 54. On the "Donations of Alexandria," cf. Osgood 2006, 338-9; and Patterson, L.E. 2015. *Antony and Armenia*. TAPA, Vol. 45, No. 1, pp. 95-9.

foreign queen: he divorced Octavia for Cleopatra in 32, severing all familial ties with Octavian and all political ties with Italy.⁷⁰ Subsequently, Antony minted a new series of denarii featuring his new queen Cleopatra. On the obverse, Antony, in profile, wears an Armenian crown, and is framed by the legend “Armenia subjugated by Antony,” in an attempt to propagandize his own martial *virtus*. On the reverse, Cleopatra, in profile, wears an Egyptian crown, and is framed by the legend “To Cleopatra, queen of kings and of the children of kings,” confirming Antony’s dynastic intentions not only for Egypt, but also for Rome.⁷¹ The ubiquitous support Antony once garnered in Rome, even among the consuls of that year, Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus and Gaius Sosius, staunch supporters of Antony, disappeared.

Knowing that he would lose popular support if he were to declare outright a civil war against Antony, Octavian needed to convince the senate that Rome’s enemy was not Antony, but Cleopatra, absolving himself of the responsibility and repercussions of reigniting another civil war.⁷² If he could provoke a war with Egypt, not only would Octavian be able to eliminate Antony, but he would also be able to oppress a prevailing foreign kingdom, putting its people under the yoke, taking away their *virtus*, and extinguishing any possibility of threat to the existence of Rome. Just as renown came to the Great Marcellus for subjugating the Insubrians and the Syracusans, to Marius for subjugating the Cimbri and the Tuetones, and to Caesar for subjugating the Gauls, Octavian knew that extirpating a viable threat to the hegemony of Rome like Cleopatra would bring him what he most desired to attain: affirmation of his leadership, which only *virtus* from a great foreign war against a powerful and menacing ruler could give him. In the spring of 32, the opportunity to earn affirmation as Rome’s singular military leader was presented to him in the contents of Antony’s will.

⁷⁰ Liv. *Per.* 132; Plut. *Ant.* 57.2; Dio 50.3.

⁷¹ Legend on obverse: ANTONI ARMENIA DEVICTA. Reverse: CLEOPATRAE REGINAE REGVM FILIORVM REBVVM: RRC 543 (Crawford 1974, 539). The denarii also suggest that there may have been a marriage between Antony and Cleopatra around this time, although a union was quite possibly conducted privately, since there exists no literary testimony on the matter.

⁷² Cornwell 2017, 97.

When Octavian learned of the contents of Antony's will, he rushed to the Temple of Vesta, where the will was deposited, and illegally seized the document from the Vestal Virgins. Octavian read the contents of Antony's will both to the senate and to the public. The document allegedly bequeathed money and gifts to his own children by Cleopatra and acknowledged Cleopatra's son Caesarion as paternal son of Julius Caesar, with the implication that he was the rightful heir of Caesar, not Octavian. The will also decreed that Antony, even if he should die in the city of Rome, be buried in Alexandria by Cleopatra's side. Whether or not these were the true contents of the will is a moot point; for, Octavian quickly rallied support for war. The indignation for Antony and Cleopatra among the Roman people spread like wildfire, causing them to believe the rumor that if Antony should win against Octavian in battle, he will hand Rome over to Cleopatra and transfer the seat of power from Rome to Alexandria. Octavian received his endorsement from the senate and the people to officially declare war on the barbarian queen of Egypt, Cleopatra (and, nominally, on Antony, who was declared a *hostis publicus* in 32, and stripped of his *honores*, including his consulship).⁷³

Toward the end of 32, Antony and Cleopatra set sail to Greece, where, at the mouth of the Ambracian Gulf, he established his camp at Actium, a site sacred to Apollo. Subsequently, Agrippa had engineered a blockade across the Ionian Sea, precluding supplies to reach Actium, which, consequently, initiated a famine and the outbreak of plague among the Antonians.⁷⁴ Octavian, then, sailed across the Ionian Sea from Italy, disembarked due north of Actium, and set up his camp for his cavalry on a hill overlooking the Ambracian Gulf. Cleopatra, fearing defeat at the hands of Octavian, convinced Antony to create a ruse in which the lovers would sail away unnoticed, without rousing suspicion or fear among their allies, while battle ensued.⁷⁵ Having burned his entire fleet except for his best ships, Antony took the

⁷³ Plut. *Ant.* 58, 60; Dio 50.3-4. Vell. Pat. 2.73; Suet. *Aug.* 17.2; App. *BC* 4.38; Osgood 2006, 353-4; Ward et al. 2003, 227; Cornwell 2017, 97.

⁷⁴ Dio 50.11, 14; Plut. *Ant.* 62; Ward et al. 2003, 227.

⁷⁵ Dio 50.15.

offensive line and repositioned his ships in a row at the mouth of the Ambracian Gulf in order to incite a naval battle against Agrippa's fleet.⁷⁶ On the 2nd of September, by the roar of a trumpet, the sea-battle was declared. Octavian flexed the flanks of his lines in the shape of a crescent, enveloping the Antonians; and, possessing a smaller, albeit swifter and nimbler, fleet than his opponent, Octavian's ships were able to better maneuver around the sea, dashing forward and ramming Antony's ships, causing some to plummet to the bottom of the sea, and others to become transfixed.⁷⁷ Spears, arrows, stone, and fiery projectiles from catapults rained down from the ships' towers, setting many ablaze. While fire and fury engulfed the city of ships, Cleopatra hoisted her own ships' sails and retreated toward Egypt.⁷⁸ Having caught sight of Cleopatra's retreat, Antony immediately abandoned all hope of winning the war.⁷⁹ Octavian continued to decimate the rest of Antony's fleet until the surviving Antonians yielded, surrendering their arms and their *virtus* to Octavian.⁸⁰ Victory was achieved and the enemy subjugated, but shown clemency by Octavian.⁸¹ The *virtus* of Octavian overcame the *virtus* not only of Cleopatra, but also of Antony, who was no longer a Roman, but rather a foreign enemy of Rome.

Octavian did not immediately pursue the fugitives, but sailed to Egypt a year later, in the summer of 30. Before reaching Egypt, Octavian received letters from Antony, who challenged Octavian to single combat – a Roman custom in which two opposing generals pitched their martial valor on the battlefield in a hand-to-hand contest in *virtus*. Antony's gesture demonstrates that he still desired to be the man superior in *virtus*. However, Octavian refused, claiming that Antony would expire in other ways.⁸² On the 1st of August, Octavian captured the city without much resistance; and, subsequently, Antony committed suicide, absolving himself, in death, of his many crimes.⁸³ As for Cleopatra, Octavian wanted her alive. He

⁷⁶ Plut. *Ant.* 59.

⁷⁷ Dio 50.32, 51.1; Plut. *Ant.* 66.

⁷⁸ Plut. *Ant.* 66; Dio 50.32, 34; Vell. Pat. 2.85.

⁷⁹ Plut. *Ant.* 66-7; Vell. Pat. 2.85.

⁸⁰ Vell. Pat. 2.85.

⁸¹ Vell. Pat. 2.86-7.

⁸² Plut. *Ant.* 75.

⁸³ Vell. Pat. 2.87-8; Dio 51.9-10; Livy *Per.* 133.

desired to parade her in his triumph in Rome, believing that her presence would amplify his due glory when the public gazed upon the captured queen of Egypt, who no longer threatened the supremacy of Rome, stripped of her power and bereft of her *virtus* and of the *virtus* of her nation.⁸⁴ After realizing Octavian's intent to sail her back to Rome, Cleopatra, knowing that she would be steered through the streets of Rome as Octavian's prized captive and emblem of his *virtus*, regarded this fate worse than death, and resolved to die by her own hand.⁸⁵ The nation of Egypt, yoked by Octavian, now belonged to Rome.

In 30, Octavian returned to Actium to found a new city named Nikopolis, "the city of victory," where he inaugurated games, enlarged the preexisting Temple of Apollo, and began the construction of an altar dedicated to the Actian Apollo.⁸⁶ While Octavian was managing affairs in Syria, Asia, and Parthia, the senate passed resolutions to honor Octavian's naval victory, first granting him a triumph over Cleopatra and Egypt, and establishing two triumphal arches, one in Brundisium and one in the Forum, both adorned with the trophies of Rome's foreign Egyptian enemies. Subsequently, the senate voted to confer upon Octavian tribunician powers for life, granting him judicial authority over the senate, as well as the power to veto, superseding all other magisterial privileges.⁸⁷ These, Octavian knew, were the types of *honores* which *virtus* conferred.

When he returned to Italy and entered Rome in the summer of 29, Octavian celebrated a triple triumph in the course of three consecutive days (the 13th – 15th of August) – over Illyricum, Actium, and

⁸⁴ Dio 51.11, 13; Plut. *Ant.* 78, 84.

⁸⁵ Dio 51.13-4; Vell. Pat. 2.87; Plut. *Ant.* 85-6; Hor. *Odes* 1.37.

⁸⁶ Dio 51.18; Str. *Geo.* 7.7; Suet. *Aug.* 18.2.

⁸⁷ Dio 51.19. Moreover, according to Dio, the senate also decreed that: the foundation of the Temple of Divus Iulius should be decorated with the rostra of the captured ships at Actium; a festival be held every four years in honor of Octavian; a *supplicatio* be held on Octavian's birthday and on the anniversary of his victory; Octavian be met by the senate and people of Rome during his *adventus*; Antony's memorials in Rome be removed; the day on which Antony be born be damned; the name Marcus be forbidden. According to Pliny (*NH* 22.6-8, 13), Octavian also received the "siege crown," which signified Octavian's role in rescuing an entire army from a perilous situation. On tribunician power, see also Tac. *Ann.* 1.2. On the triumphal arch in the Forum, see *ILS* 81, which is a large inscription that may have come from the triple-bay arch situated to the south of the Temple of Divus Iulius: Cooley (ed.) 2008, 185.

Egypt.⁸⁸ The triple triumph served as the apex of his military career, both past and future; for, Octavian declined all future triumphs in order to preserve the singularity of this martial achievement.⁸⁹ According to Dio, on the first day, Octavian celebrated a triumph over the Pannonians, the Dalmatians, the Iapydes, as well as some Germans and Gauls (Morini). On the second day, Octavian celebrated his naval victory at Actium. And on the third day, Octavian entered Rome along the triumphal route and triumphed spectacularly over Egypt. The Egyptian triumph surpassed the preceding triumphs in opulence. Although he could not parade the barbarian queen through the streets of Rome just as Caesar paraded a vulnerable Vercingetorix, stripped of his arms and *virtus*, during his triumph over Gaul, Octavian found another way to demonstrate to the people of Rome that Egypt was stripped of its *virtus*. According to Dio, “among the other splendors, a likeness of the deceased Cleopatra, lying on a couch, was carried, so that she, in this way, along with the other [Egyptian] captives, and with her children Alexander called Helios and Cleopatra called Selene, be gazed upon as a spectacle during the procession.”⁹⁰ Not only was Cleopatra, in the form of her effigy, paraded through the streets of Rome, but also her children and other Egyptian captives, likely Egyptian soldiers, fettered and stripped of their armor and weapons. Bereft of their *virtus*, the Egyptians were humiliated by public gaze, ideologically symbolizing that not only has Octavian neutralized the martial threat of Egypt; but, by bringing the Egyptian army into Rome, they, along with their *virtus*, and the *virtus* of Egypt, now belonged to Octavian. The triumph culminated with the *adventus* of Octavian, who succeeded the parade of spoils and captives as conqueror of Rome’s barbarian enemies, and *triumphator* over their barbarian leader.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Aug. 4; Dio 51.21; *Fasti Triumphales* for the thirteenth and the fifteenth of August, 29; *Fasti Antiates* for the fourteenth of August, 29; Livy *Per.* 133; Lange 2016, 59.

⁸⁹ Lange 2016, 159.

⁹⁰ τὰ τε γὰρ ἄλλα καὶ ἡ Κλεοπάτρα ἐπὶ κλίνης ἐν τῷ τοῦ θανάτου μιμήματι παρεκομίσθη, ὥστε τρόπον τινὰ καὶ ἐκείνην μετὰ τε τῶν ἄλλων αἰχμαλώτων καὶ μετὰ τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ καὶ Ἡλίου, τῆς τε Κλεοπάτρας τῆς καὶ Σελήνης, τῶν τέκνων, ὡς πομπεῖον ὀφθῆναι. Plut. *Ant.* 86; Prop. (2.1) adduces that a personification of the Nile was also paraded during Octavian’s triumph.

⁹¹ Vell. Pat. 2.89; Dio 51.21.

III.II: The Reliefs from the Victory Monument at Actium

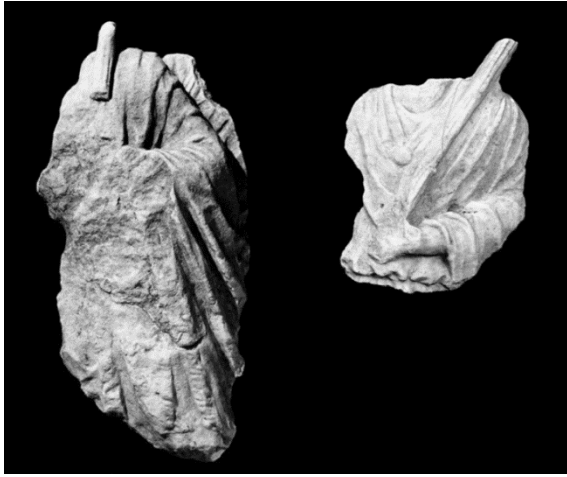


Figure 33: Actian Monument relief with lictor and Camillus. Ca. 29 BCE.



Figure 34: Actian Monument relief with ferculum-bearer. Ca. 29 BCE.

Octavian's triple triumph is the subject of a series of reliefs that decorated the exterior of the victory monument at Nikopolis, which Octavian commissioned shortly after the Battle of Actium.⁹² On the spot where he had once established his military camp, Octavian had a stone platform placed, upon which stood an open-air memorial to commemorate his accomplishments at Actium. This monument

comprised a limestone altar placed in the center and surrounded on three sides by porticoes. Dedicated both to Neptune, the god of the sea, and to Mars, the god of war, this trophy-monument stood as a physical and visual testament to Octavian's martial valor, his *virtus*, gained from his victory over his foreign enemies, Antony and Cleopatra during the maritime battle at Actium.⁹³ Discovered in 1805, the vestiges of this open-air sanctuary at Actium have yielded the remains of several reliefs, fragments of the original dedicatory inscription, as well as 1,129 fragments of two continuous figural friezes carved from Pentelic marble in a classicizing style, likely executed in a neo-Attic workshop, the remnants of which constitute battle scenes, some mythological, as well as part of Octavian's triumphal procession in Rome.⁹⁴

⁹² For a more detailed study of the reliefs, see Zachos 2009.

⁹³ Seut. *Aug.* 18; *Contra Dio* (51.1), who states that the memorial was dedicated to Apollo. The dedicatory inscription proves that the altar was dedicated to Neptune and Mars, cf. Murray and Petsas (1991), who have reconstructed the inscription on page 86: "Imperator Caesar, son of the divine Julius, following the victory in the war which he waged on behalf of the Republic in this region, when he was consul for the fifth time and commander-in-chief (imperator) for the seventh time, after peace had been secured on land and sea, consecrated to Neptune and Mars the camp from which he set forth to attack the enemy now ornamented with naval spoils." For the trophy monument, cf. Zachos 2003.

⁹⁴ Zachos 2003, 83; 2009, 300.

The triumphal event gives us a *terminus post quem* for the altar's frieze of 29; and since the inscription lacks the titulature *Augustus*, a *terminus ante quem* of 27 can be construed.

Many of the fragments demonstrate a procession of figures ambling toward the left. The figures are placed on two separate planes, similar in style to the reliefs of the Ara Pacis, emphasizing those in the foreground, carved in high relief, over the figures in the background, carved in shallow relief, creating an illusion of several processional rows. Among the figures are several lictors, who carry *fascēs* upon their shoulders. One of the lictors, unfortunately missing his head, and carrying *fascēs* in his left arm, wears a toga and a *bullā* around his neck, indicative of his youth, class, and higher status, possibly to be identified

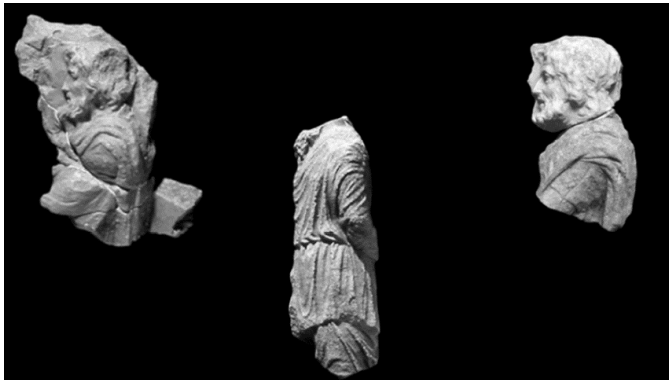


Figure 35: Actian Monument relief with prisoners. Ca. 29 BCE.



Figure 36: Actian Monument relief depicting procession of senators. Ca. 29 BCE.

as a *camillus* (Fig. 33). Fragments of musicians, decorated sacrificial animals, and a cavalcade of foreign dignitaries have also been discovered, as well as a *ferculum*-bearer who must have carried on his shoulders the trophy, partially depicted on a separate fragment (Fig.

34).⁹⁵ Much of the trophy depicted in this fragment is lost; however, a disheveled and bearded barbarian captive is seated, likely bound, against the trophy (Fig. 35). The iconography is similar to Caesar's coins of conquest, which emphasized the *virtus* lost by Rome's barbarian enemies. The *ferculum*-bearer likely preceded the procession of

⁹⁵ Zachos 2009, 291.

prisoners, as mentioned by Dio, wearing long trousers, and fettered behind their backs, forced to follow the trophy comprised of their captured weapons and armor, lacking any residual symbol of their *virtus*, and visibly humiliated.⁹⁶



Figure 37: Actian Monument relief depicting the triumphal chariot of Octavian. Ca. 29 BCE.

Five larger marble fragments comprise a slab (three meters in length and one meter in height) depicting the *triumphator* himself, complemented by the procession of the senate, as described by Dio, who states that the magistrates succeeded, rather than preceded, Octavian during the triumphal procession.⁹⁷ Nine togate men, dressed in the *toga exigua* and crowned with laurel, follow behind the triumphal quadriga of Octavian (Fig. 36). Octavian, dressed in a *toga picta*, crowned with laurel, and holding a long branch of laurel extending from his right arm and the remaining parts of a scepter in his left, rides in the car of his chariot, the *currus triumphalis*, elaborately decorated with acanthus vines framed by Corinthian columns



Figure 38: Actian Monument Relief with horse attendant. Ca. 29 BCE.

(Fig. 37).⁹⁸ Inside the car with Octavian, two small children, a boy and a girl, are depicted. Zachos postulates that the children should be considered to be the son and daughter of Antony and Cleopatra, Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene, whom Dio places in the procession on the third day of Octavian's

⁹⁶ Dio 51.21.

⁹⁷ Dio 51.21.

⁹⁸ Octavian's head has been discovered, but that fragment has never been published, see Zachos 2003, 90; Zachos 2009, 295.

triple triumph.⁹⁹ If this interpretation is correct, which I believe it is, then the children's appearance during the procession underscores Octavian's *clementia*. As one of this four characteristic virtues recognized by the senate, his clemency is here publicly demonstrated by the sparing of the lives of his enemies' children.

Pulling the reins of the four horses is a young male, adorned with a laurel crown, who turns to face the *triumphator* (Fig. 38). Zachos believes that he is slave; however, his laurel crown suggests a higher status.¹⁰⁰ Likely completing the triumphal procession are Octavian's soldiers, without whose collective *virtus* Octavian would not have been victorious in battle (Fig. 39). Zachos conjectures that the figure represents a Roman soldier, raising his shield in a gesture of acclaim.¹⁰¹ However, it is more likely that the figure represented is another *ferculum*-bearer, who assists in carrying the captured weapons and shields

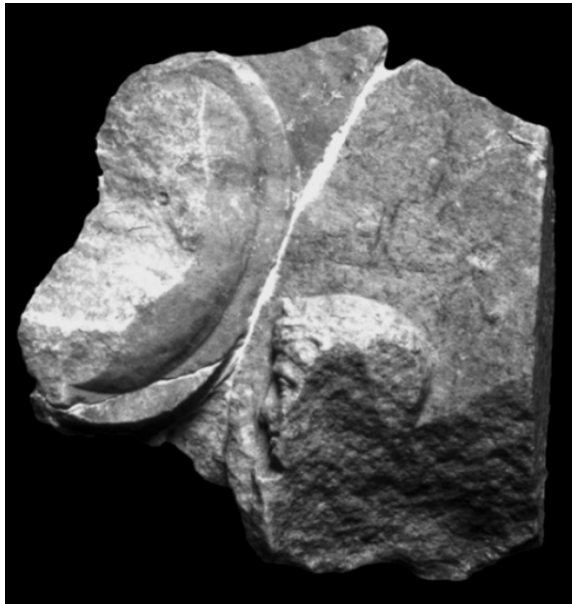


Figure 39: Actian Monument relief depicting soldier with shield. Ca. 29 BCE.

through the procession, rather than a soldier lifting his shield high above his head in celebration, the iconography of which would be inconsistent with the iconography of subsequent triumphal processions on imperial reliefs.¹⁰²

Diverging from subsequent representations of the triumph in relief during the imperial period, which are often reformulated as myth-historical

⁹⁹ Zachos 2009, 293, 299-300; Dio 51.21. Zachos (2003, 91-2), however, believes that the events depicted must represent the triumph over Actium and not the triumph over Egypt.

¹⁰⁰ Zachos 2009, 295; 2003, 90. The triumphal procession of Septimius Severus on a relief from the Quadrifrons at Lepcis Magna depicts a youth, who wears a bulla with a portrait around his neck, pulling the reins of the four-horsed chariot, which suggests a special status, higher than a slave.

¹⁰¹ Zachos 2009, 295.

¹⁰² The triumphal procession appears to comprise only the upper register of a two-register frieze. Some fragments depict weapons and armor hanging from tree trunks (*spolia*-clad trophies), ships, or parts of ships, such as bows, sterns (*aphlaston*), steering-oars, rostra; and two fragments depict men standing on ships. That the frieze of ships and spoils represent the Battle of Actium itself, over which Octavian triumphs, historically and now visually, is doubtless.



Figure 40: Fragment A: Actian Monument relief depicting leg of an Amazon (?). Ca. 29 BCE.

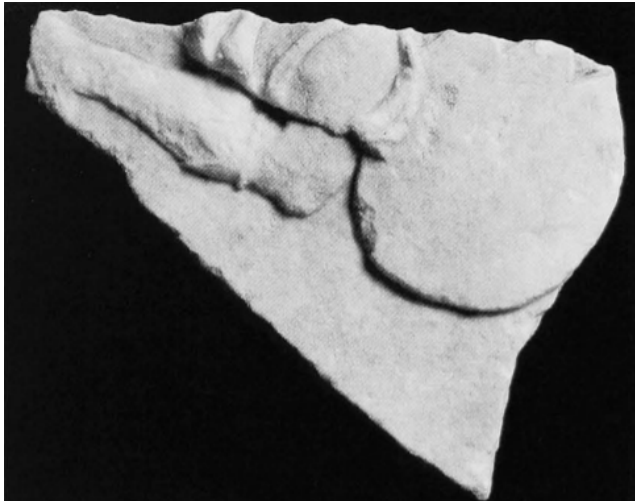


Figure 41: Fragment B: Actian Monument relief depicting falling Amazon (?). Ca. 29 BCE.

celebrations, populated by divinities as if they themselves were visually present during the event, the Actian triumphal procession, from *ferculum*-bearer to the procession of the senate, is completely devoid of the divine, suggesting that a more documentary visual narrative of the triple triumph in

29 (congruent with Dio's account of the triple triumph) was commissioned, even if the triumphal procession represented in these reliefs is meant to be viewed as a conflated narrative of all three days of triumphal celebrations. However, there are many fragments which comprise a different sculptural frieze belonging to another, unidentified section of the Actian monument.

Three fragments depicting mythological figures have been discovered, likely belonging to another side of the altar's continuous friezes. Fragment A depicts an Amazon in high relief, identified by her short tunic and high boots, with a bent knee, marching forward. Next to her is a cylindrical object, perhaps an architectural element from the background (**Fig. 40**).¹⁰³ Fragment B seems to depict the leg of an Amazon in high boots, carved in low relief, who wears a short tunic and carries upon her person a circular object, likely representing a shield (**Fig. 41**). Fragment C depicts a pair of feet in elaborately decorated shoes, of

¹⁰³ The object could, possibly, be a quiver, perhaps placed behind a seated Roma, just like the one placed on the ground behind Roma on the Medinaceli Reliefs discussed below.



Figure 42: Fragment C: Actian Monument relief depicting Roma, seated. Ca. 29 BCE.

which one is placed just above a helmet, which lies on the ground to the right of the decorative ornament of a ship's stern (*aphlaston*) (Fig. 42). The foot floating above the abandoned helmet is depicted at such a sharp degree that the character represented

must be seated. Zachos conjectures that the first two fragments may belong to an Amazonomachy. If he is correct, then the battle against the Amazons can and should be interpreted as a mythological analogue to a historical battle between the victors, visually represented by the heroes, and their foreign and barbarian enemies, represented by the Amazons. As for the third figure, Zachos, I believe correctly, identifies the figure as a seated Roma, who certainly sits on a pile of spolia taken from the defeated enemy, here represented by the ship's stern and the singular helmet carefully arranged in front of her.¹⁰⁴ Her image as a seated deity would have already been familiar to the Greek east, attested by the earliest surviving representation of Roma from a 3rd-century BCE didrachm minted at Locri Epizephyrri, which depicts the goddess seated on a pile of armor (Fig. 24).



Figure 43: Denarius of Fabius Pictor featuring a seated Roma. 126 BCE.

The earliest Roman representation of a seated Roma was minted on a series of denarii by the moneyer N. Fabius Pictor in 126 BCE (Fig. 43).¹⁰⁵ Seated in a chair, Roma wears a long chiton, draped to her feet, one of which is lifted off the ground, similar to the Actian fragment. The earliest Roman representation of Roma seated on a pile of armor was minted in 115/4 by an anonymous moneyer (Fig. 44).¹⁰⁶ Roma, wearing a

¹⁰⁴ Zachos 2003, 83-6.

¹⁰⁵ RRC 268 (Crawford 1974, 231).

¹⁰⁶ RRC 287 (Crawford 1974, 302).



Figure 44: Anonymous denarius depicting a seated Roma. 115/4 BCE.

long chiton down to her ankles, sits on a pile of shields and one strewn helmet placed next to her decorative boots, again similar in iconography to the Actian fragment. This motif is not uncommon on Roman coins minted in the late-2nd and early-1st century BCE, and would have been recognizable to the visitor at Nikopolis. The Actian relief fragment, however, may very well be the earliest representation of a seated Roma in state-sponsored relief sculpture.

As we will see, this seems to be the archetypal Roma depicted in imperial relief sculpture on Roman triumphal monuments, especially during the Julio-Claudian period. The presence of Roma on the Actian monument suggests that other Roman personifications may have also been represented, likely Victoria, to emblemize victory at the Battle of Actium, but, perhaps, also a personified representation of one of Octavian's recognized virtues: *virtus*.

Virtus, whose identification may be revealed by Fragment A, if, indeed, this Amazon can be defined as processing forward, as Virtus often does in subsequent imperial reliefs depicting the emperor's triumph. If Fragment A does depict Virtus, then this would be the earliest surviving example of the goddess in relief. And although the *virtus* of Octavian was not officially recognized by the senate until 27, at the time when the senate conferred both the title *Augustus* and the *clipeus virtutis* upon Octavian, this later date should not preclude the possibility that Virtus was represented on the victory monument at Nikopolis, especially since a monument of this scale and craftsmanship would take several years to complete, if we may use the construction of the Ara Pacis as a reference (13-9 BCE). Circumstantial evidence supporting the possibility of the appearance of Virtus on the Actian Monument is provided by a series of historical reliefs from the early 1st-century CE known as the Medinaceli Reliefs.

III.III: The Medinaceli Reliefs

In 1570, the slabs made of Carrara marble that comprise the Medinaceli Reliefs were relocated from Naples to the Casa de Pilatos in Seville by the first Duke of Alcalá, Viceroy of Naples, Per Afán de Ribera. Today, two reliefs remain in the Casa de Pilatos in Seville; however six others are now a part of the private Medinaceli collection of the Duchesse of Cardona in Cordoba. Moreover, three other reliefs were sold to a buyer in Budapest, which now belong to the city's Museum of Fine Arts. In the 18th century, the reliefs were washed with acid and, subsequently, restored. Many of the original details are now forever lost, supplanted by 18th-century additions.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, the Medinaceli Reliefs constitute a programmatic cycle of Augustus' greatest accomplishments: the Battle of Actium, the triple triumph of 29, and a ceremonial procession of a *tensa* – a sacred, driver-less chariot made for Augustus' funeral and apotheosis in 14 CE, giving us a *terminus post quem* of 14 CE, and stylistically dated to the Claudian period.¹⁰⁸

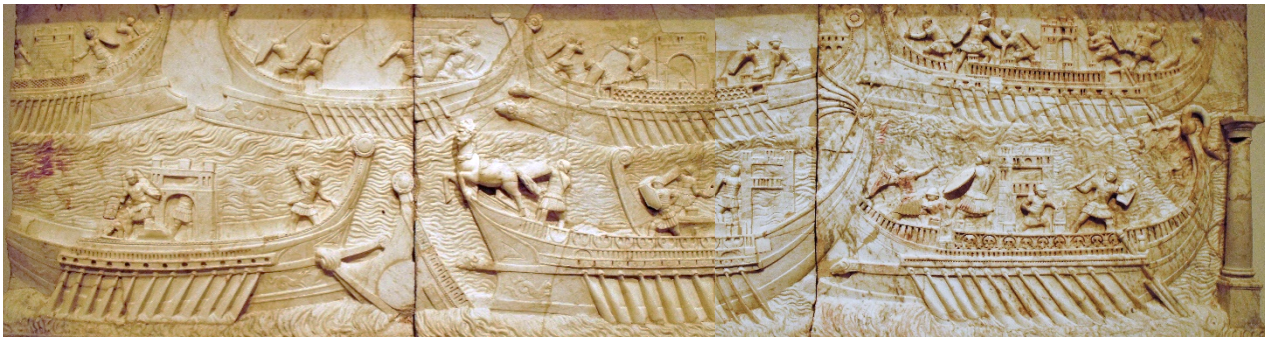


Figure 45: Medinaceli Reliefs: Actian sea-battle. Ca. 41-54 CE.

¹⁰⁷ Koeppel 1999; Trunk 2002; Schäfer 2013, 221; 2008, 137; Lange 2016, 171-94.

¹⁰⁸ Schäfer 2002, 46-9; 2013, 223. For information on the *tensa* in antiquity, see Latham 2016, esp. 7-8, 56-9, 105-34. Koeppel (1999) considers stylistic similarities of moving folds (wind-blown) of Virtus' drapery with the female personifications from the Arcus Novus Reliefs, which are often dated to the Claudian period. Cf. also Lange 2016, 189-94. As for the provenance, Schäfer posits that the reliefs come from Campania, since the reliefs were in possession of Don Pedro Afán de Ribera, the Viceroy of Naples, in 1570 before they were relocated to Seville; although this is not, by any means, conclusive: see Schäfer 2013, 322. However, a temple dedicated to the imperial cult of Divus Augustus is a reasonable monument to accommodate the Medinaceli group whether in Campania or in Rome, perhaps decorating an altar just like the reliefs from Nikopolis. *Contra* Szidat (1997), who believes that the quality of craftsmanship of the reliefs should point to the city of Rome; however, Koeppel (1999) dismisses Szidat's claim and adduces that high-quality craftsmanship does not necessitate a sculptural workshop in Rome, citing the reliefs from the Arch of Trajan at Benevento.

Three of the slabs represent detailed events during the Actian sea-battle (**Fig. 45**).¹⁰⁹ The end of the scene is demarcated by a Doric Column placed at the far right of the third slab. The scene depicted on the left slab is incomplete, indicative of the fact that one or more slabs are missing. Schäfer correctly adds a fourth fragment to the Battle of Actium scene, which illustrates



Figure 46: Medinaceli Reliefs: fragment of Apollo and tripod. Ca. 41-54 CE.

the god Apollo, holding a lyre, and seated on a rocky outcrop, surmounted by a tripod (**Fig. 46**).¹¹⁰ This scene represents a topographical analogue to the hill upon which Octavian established his camp at the sacred site of Apollo – the patron god of Actium, and to whom Octavian dedicated his Actian victory monument.

Depicted on the other reliefs are two processions, one advancing toward the right, and another toward the left. Although the reliefs have been heavily damaged and, subsequently, heavily restored, the opposing processions are formulaic and belong to the canon of triumphal iconography propagated by the



Figure 47: Medinaceli Reliefs: Procession of lictors and musicians. Ca. 41-54 CE.

emperors during the imperial period. Therefore, some of the figures can be identified by either their attributes, or by their role in other imperial reliefs, including Virtus. The procession advancing toward the right is certainly triumphal in nature. One of the marble slabs depicts a group of males: two flutists (*tibicines*), preceded by three men in military garb and crowned with

¹⁰⁹ Montfaucon 1717, IV, 289, tav. 142; Schäfer 2013, 321-2; 2008, 137-154; 2002, 46; Trunk 2010, 31, figs. 3-4; Lange 2016, 187-194.

¹¹⁰ Schäfer 2002, 3-49; 2013, 321-2.

laurel (**Fig. 47**).¹¹¹ Identified by the *fascēs* he carries, the central figure is a lictor, whose appearance suggests that the emperor must be close by. The other two men flanking the lictor do not carry *fascēs*, but they wear short tunics similar to the dress of the lictor, which suggests that they, too, are lictors.¹¹² In the foreground, a group of young women, dressed in long and heavy drapery, belted at the waist, accompany the musicians and the lictors. They carry on their person shields, likely ceremonial, except for the last young girl, who does not process, but rather turns her attention toward the opposite direction. Schäfer posits that the children are personnel of the imperial cult, whose duty it is to represent both *pietas* towards the gods and the expiation after war.¹¹³ The representation of *pietas* in the triumphal procession of Augustus is appropriate, particularly since *pietas* was one of Augustus' four cardinal virtues, along with *virtus*, *clementia*, and *iustitia*, inscribed on the *clipeus virtutis*, given to him by the senate in 27.



Figure 48: Medinaceli Reliefs: Fragment of trumpeter. Ca. 41-54 CE.

A related fragment depicts another musician, this time a trumpeter (*tubicen*), who blasts his horn in order to announce the arrival of the emperor during the triumphal parade (**Fig. 48**).¹¹⁴ An ostensibly more important figure, with an original head and Julio-Claudian hairstyle, precedes the trumpeter. The man wears a heavily draped tunic, belted at the waist, and a *paludamentum*, clasped at his

right shoulder, around his neck. He held an attribute in his left hand, however, only the vestiges of a faint outline remain. A third male figure turns his attention in the opposite direction; but, unfortunately, the relief breaks here.

¹¹¹ Montfaucon 1717, III, 298, tav. 170, 172; Trunk 2002, 252; 2010, 35, fig. 6; Schäfer 2008, 137-154; 2013, 321-2.

¹¹² Lange (2016, 174-5) suggests that the man on the right is a Roman magistrate or senator; however, senators did not wear short tunics, but rather the toga.

¹¹³ Schäfer 2013, 322.

¹¹⁴ Schäfer 2002, 31-49; 2013, 321-2.

Arguably the most ideologically important relief of the Medinaceli group is the Triumph Relief, representing the emperor himself, which belongs to the series of slabs that depicts the triumphal procession advancing toward the right (Fig. 49).¹¹⁵ At first glance, the relief appears to be in excellent condition; however, it has been restored and partially reworked, likely to suit an



Figure 49: Medinaceli Reliefs: Triumph Relief. Octavian in triumphal chariot, guided by Virtus.

idealized visual aesthetic of the owner. We can extrapolate, however, that this scene must have been the focal point of the entire visual narrative, with the greatest importance placed on the triumphant-emperor-in-quadrige motif that pervaded the visual landscape of imperial Rome through its representations on architectural monuments, in the medium of marble and bronze statues, and its appearance on innumerable issues of imperial coins. The emperor, unequivocally Augustus, albeit with head restored, rides in his triumphal chariot, the *currus triumphalis*. With his right hand, he waves the branches of laurel – the telltale sign of victory in battle – just as he does on the Triumph Relief from the Actian Monument. In his left hand, he wields a scepter, crowned with an eagle – the symbol of his *imperium*, endorsed by Jupiter. The car is also decorated in low relief. A winged Victoria fixes a shield of the enemy likely onto a trophy – a martial symbol of the emperor's *virtus* gained in warfare. The figure who pulls the reins of the horses, leading Augustus into the city of Rome during his triumphal procession is none other than Virtus.¹¹⁶ Virtus is dressed in her canonical Amazonian tunic, belted at the waist, which exposes her right breast.

¹¹⁵ Montfaucon 1717, IV.1, 164, tav. 105; Trunk 2002, tav. 70b; 2010, 35, fig. 6; Schäfer 2008, 137-54; 2013, 321-2; Lange 2016, 174, fig. E2 and 184, fig. E5.

¹¹⁶ Schäfer 2013, 321.

Strapped to her chest is her *balteus*, which must have carried the sheath for her short-sword, or *parazonium* (not shown). She turns her head back at the emperor, who may have caught her eyes, visually linking the emperor with his *virtus* through line of sight. She wears a stylized, non-Classical helmet type with a spiraled crest upon her head, which is indicative of a reworking. Moreover, the very shallow depth of the right side of the relief that comprises the lower half of her body is also indicative of reduction, the reworking of which is corroborated by an 18th-century drawing of the relief.

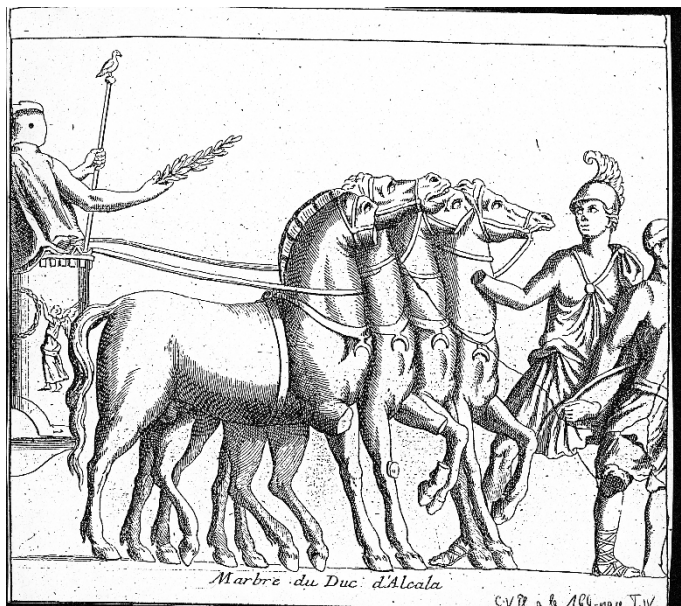


Figure 50: Drawing of the Triumph Relief from the Medinaceli group by Montfaucon. Ca. 1717.

Montfaucon, in his 18th-century magnum opus on Roman iconography, published a series of drawings of the Medinaceli Reliefs, preserving some original details of the reliefs before any more restoration or manipulation occurred. The drawing of the Triumph Relief substantiates the reduction of the relief; and, moreover, attests to a deliberate erasure that helps to better contextualize the scene (Fig. 50).¹¹⁷

Virtus was originally preceded by a captive, whose arms are bound behind his back. The appearance of the fettered prisoner of war sheds light both on the deliberate position of Virtus within the scene, as well as on her inclusion within the visual framework of the emperor's triumph as intermediary between the victorious and the defeated. For the first time ever, Virtus has become animated. No longer is she just a symbolic representation of the emperor's martial valor, but she is now a participating deity, who is given the performative role as divine herald of the emperor in triumphal scenes, replacing the male attendant

¹¹⁷ Montfaucon 1717, IV.1, 164, tav. 105.

who commonly pulled the reins of the quadriga, and as the deity who separates those who possess *virtus* from those who no longer possess *virtus*.

Moreover, the presence of an animated Virtus as divine herald of the emperor changes the circumstances of the scene from historical to myth-historical. No longer are we able to look for a specific moment in time which corresponds exactly with the procession taking place in the Medinaceli Reliefs, but it should, rather, be understood that the procession is an idealized event in which the gods actively participate, just as if they were historically present at the time. This is a radical departure from the Triumph Relief that decorated the Actian Monument, which represents a more documentary occasion *sans* gods. There, the quadriga was pulled by a male attendant, and not by Virtus. The Triumph Relief from the Medinaceli group is not the earliest Roman relief to portray a myth-historical occasion, however. The famous Census Relief, traditionally dated to the early 1st-century BCE, from the so-called Altar of Ahenobarbus, depicts both a *suovetaurilia* sacrifice and the taking of the census, between which stands the god Mars, who must be the beneficiary of the sacrifice as tutelary god of the Roman censors, and whose appearance must have served as a location device alluding to the Campus Martius, where the census took place.¹¹⁸ Needless to say, Mars has been forged into a participant as overseer of the taking of the census, stressing his visual and ideological importance that helps contextualize the scene for the viewer. Similarly, Virtus on the Triumph Relief was consciously selected to underscore the emperor's acquired *virtus* at the Battle of Actium, which he brought back with him to Rome.

For the first time in Roman art, Virtus is illustrated as an active character; she is no longer a representation of Marcellus' cult statue in a *Standmotiv*. This is significant because Virtus is given not only a prominent visual position near the emperor, but also the performative responsibility of leading the emperor in triumph, the motif of which will resonate with many subsequent emperors with strong military

¹¹⁸ Kleiner 1992, 49-51; Gruen 1992, 145-52; Torelli 1992, 5-20.

records. And it is reasonable to suggest that this motif of Virtus leading the emperor in triumph was originally a Julio-Claudian invention and introduced in the visual repertoire of public art surrounding the military accomplishments of Augustus before her image was adopted, or rather co-opted, by subsequent emperors who publicized her image to prove their own worth in *virtus* to the public.

Moreover, at the right end of the relief, a young male captive processes in front of Virtus, overlapping her body. Unfortunately, the relief panel ends on the body, bisecting the captive, whose other half was depicted on the subsequent panel. However, the captive, ostensibly bald, is bare-chested, wearing only a short skirt, possibly belted, around his waist. His right arm is pulled behind his back and his left hand appears to be cuffed in a restraining apparatus. The male captive is doubtless an Egyptian, wearing a *shendyt* – a short skirt worn by men above the knees in Egypt. It is unclear whether Virtus physically engages with the Egyptian prisoner. However, it is clear that Virtus acts as the visual agent connecting the barbarian captive with his Roman capturer – the victorious emperor. Virtus symbolizes two things here, which are, for all intents and purposes, one and the same: the ideological martial *virtus* the emperor acquired in combat at the Battle of Actium, as well as the goddess' approval of the emperor's superiority in *virtus*. For the emperor, possessing military *virtus* was essential to his political and military reputation, best acquired through victory in warfare against a foreign enemy of Rome, especially one that was a viable threat to Rome's supremacy, like the Gauls and the Carthaginians for Marcellus, the Gauls for Caesar, the Parthians for Caesar and Antony, and Cleopatra and the Egyptians for Augustus. This is the *virtus* Augustus desperately needed to validate his military authority and rally the Roman people behind his command and, ultimately, away from the foreign influence of Antony and Cleopatra.

Furthermore, we have to remember that Virtus is an un-Roman and uncivilized barbarian herself. And, as I have argued above, Marcellus created the image of Virtus as a barbarian Amazon to symbolize the origins of martial *virtus* – combat against the barbarian enemy who possessed their own martial *virtus*. Moreover, Caesar, during his campaigns in Gaul, elucidates that both the Romans and the barbarians have

virtus, but only the side with the greater *virtus* will become victorious, whereas the defeated will be left without *virtus*. Caesar indicates that there existed a symbolic battle-contest in *virtus*, in which *virtus* is the ideological prize to be won, a sort of allegorical *spolium* divested from the enemy and acquired by the victor as his own. Thus, we have to consider why, beginning in the Julio-Claudian period, *Virtus*, a foreign barbarian, makes her debut in scenes of imperial triumph, which celebrates the victory of the emperor over his foreign enemies, and why her image as a non-Roman, Amazon warrior, who accompanies the most important man in Rome, continued to be propagated in scenes of triumph and victory.

Just as the trophy allegorized the *virtus* gained by the victor in a contest in *virtus*, as well as the loss of *virtus* stripped from the conquered foe, so too did *Virtus*. As the analogical bridge between the emperor and the Egyptian captives, *Virtus*, in the Triumph Relief, represents the *virtus* acquired in warfare against Rome's foreign enemy during the Battle of Actium. Bereft of the *virtus* they possessed before they were captured, the captured Egyptians are moved along by *Virtus*, making way for the victorious emperor, who earned the goddess' divine endowment and favor. The quality of *virtus* no longer belongs to both military parties; it now only belongs to the victor who earned it in warfare, the emperor. The *virtus* of "the others," personified by the Amazon goddess, who was once a part of the enemy's military strength, has turned her head away from the Egyptian prisoner and back in order to gaze at Augustus, visually communicating that *virtus* is now on the side of the Romans and no longer on the side of the Egyptians.

Virtus' presence as the right-hand of the emperor in victory scenes is not random, but rather a conscious, propagandistic resolve, attested by the numerous subsequent state-commissioned victory scenes depicted on imperial monuments and on issues of imperial coins. The Roman viewer must have been cognizant of the image and role of *Virtus* by the Julio-Claudian period as a manifestation of martial glory. The goddess' three cult statues in her three sanctuaries in the city of Rome, coupled with the issues

of coins featuring Honos and Virtus, circulated since the beginning of the 1st century BCE, must have contributed to the public's recognition of Virtus on the Medinaceli Reliefs.

In any case, the identification of the triumph as the one celebrated by Octavian after his victory over Antony, Cleopatra, and Egypt on the Medinaceli Reliefs would have been transparent to the public. The sea-battle must have invoked the memory of civil strife, discord, and disunity during the civil wars, as well as the possible destruction of Rome at the hands of a menacing foreign queen and a powerful Egyptian military. Concomitantly, the victory procession must have invoked the triumph of Rome's martial superiority over a real, foreign threat to Rome's existence. The Triumph Relief conveys to the viewer the consequences of Roman victory: the collective ideological impact it had on the people.¹¹⁹ Augustus, the *imperator* of the Roman army and naval fleet, led a brave expedition against Rome's foreign enemy; and because of his military excellence, his *virtus*, he concluded the civil wars and inaugurated Augustan peace – the *pax Augusta*. The Roman viewer would have recognized Virtus as the martial valor of Augustus – the martial valor he earned by defeating Rome's public enemies. And thanks to Augustus' *virtus*, Rome was safe, peace was established, and the emperor was able to maintain his position and authority. This must be the reason why the image of Virtus was so ideologically important for the Julio-Claudian dynasty to promulgate. The conceptualization of Virtus provided essential information to the viewer from the state, namely that the emperor of Rome possessed the military capacity needed to maintain security of Rome and sustain peace. And for the emperor, the image of Virtus, placed in relation to the sacrificial scene on another section of the Medinaceli reliefs that promoted the emperor's ideal of *pietas*, may have been used by the state as visual propaganda to legitimize his credibility as a "good" emperor, thereby eliciting the approval of the people, which allowed him to retain his political and military power.

¹¹⁹ Hölscher (2006, 43) rightly points out that "monuments were designed to perpetuate the memory of war and victory for future generations," with the implication that a collective significance be experienced.

Therefore, the Triumph Relief that features Augustus and Virtus visually conveys not the greatest military achievements of the emperor's life, but the *virtus* that led him to those achievements. The presence of Virtus, the goddess of the emperor's martial valor, is not only logical, but necessary, especially for the legitimacy of his rule, as well as for the legitimacy of the leadership of his successors, who benefited from Augustus' successful political and military career. And propagating his political and military accomplishments through the imperial cult of Augustus in conjunction with the promotion of the *pax Augusta* would have reinforced the credibility of the Julio-Claudian regime, hence the conscious decision to include Virtus within the visual rhetoric of the Actian triumph.

This is not the only Virtus depicted in the Medinaceli group, however. The goddess appears again in the procession advancing toward the left, comprising four panels, two of which certainly joined. On the adjoining panels, Virtus is accompanied by her divine counterpart Honos and given a similar role to that on the Triumph Relief as divine guide in imperial processions. The adjoining panels are likely preceded by the iconography of the two non-adjoining panels, and, therefore, I will discuss the two non-adjoining panels first. The two non-adjoining panels represent a sacrificial procession. Two trumpeters (*tubicines*) and two *togati* follow behind the sacrificial bull (Fig. 51).¹²⁰ Behind the *togati* is Victoria, winged, who



Figure 51: Medinaceli Reliefs: Victoria, trumpeters, and sacrificial bulls. Ca. 41-54 CE.

carries a large laurel wreath above her head, underscoring the theme of the emperor's victory in the left procession. A sacrificial attendant behind her holds an axe and seems to be attending something which would have been depicted on the next panel, likely

¹²⁰ Trunk 2002, tav. 71a; Schäfer 2013, 321-3.

another sacrificial bull. The next surviving panel depicts the rear of a bull; and the continuity of the sacrificial procession suggests that this panel was in close proximity to, or adjoined, the previous panel (**Fig. 52**).¹²¹ The central figure, proceeding to the left, and fully dressed in armor, including a cuirass, a crested helmet, and a shield, is the god Mars Ultor. Schäfer posits that this depiction of Mars may also represent Mars *Pacator*, the “Pacifier,”



Figure 52: Medinaceli Reliefs: a sacrificial bull, Mars Ultor, and Roma, seated on a pile of armor. Ca. 41-54 CE.

characterized by the branches of laurel he waves in his extended right hand.¹²² The last figure, bisected by the break in the panels, is a woman, attested by the hint of a bosom, who dons a crested helmet, once carried a scepter or spear, and sits on a pile of armor comprising a shield and a quiver with arrows. The figure can be none other than Roma. An 18th-century drawing by Montfaucon corroborates the presence of both Mars and Roma on this relief (**Fig. 53**).¹²³ What is most perplexing about Roma is that she is seated in the middle of a procession. It must be



Figure 53: Medinaceli Reliefs: Drawing of Mars and Roma by Montfaucon. Ca. 1717.

understood that the procession is advancing past the goddess, who is depicted either as a representation of a statue or as a participant, observing the train as it moves toward its terminus, the Capitoline Hill. It is also important to note here the distinct role given to Roma in a triumphal procession as a seated observer,

¹²¹ Montfaucon 1717, IV.1, 24, tav. 7; Trunk 2002 tav. 71b; Schäfer 2013, 321-3.

¹²² Schäfer 2013, 323.

¹²³ Montfaucon 1717, IV.1, 24, tav. 7.



Figure 54: Medinaceli Reliefs: Tensa group. Pompey or Neptune, Honos, Virtus, and tensa, followed by senators. Ca. 41-54 CE.

whereas Virtus assumes a more active role as she personally accompanies the emperor and guides him to his final destination.

The two reliefs that do adjoin comprise a procession of the *tensa*, or the sacred wagon with a cultic function, led by Honos and Virtus and escorted by two togate magistrates, one of whom waves a branch of laurel toward the *tensa* (Fig. 54).¹²⁴ Initially granted to Caesar during his lifetime, the honor of receiving the sacred *tensa* was later reserved for the emperor or members of the imperial family after their divinization.¹²⁵ And since the *tensa* is associated with the triumph of Augustus and decorated with the iconography of the Julian clan depicted on the wagon (Aeneas fleeing Troy with Anchises and Iulus, the white sow with suckling piglets, and Romulus carrying the *spolia opima*), it is reasonable to consider that this *tensa* represents the divinization of Augustus after his death.¹²⁶ And because the *tensa* itself was associated with divinity, as it was meant to carry the *exuviae* (the sacred objects of a god), we can consider that this *tensa* symbolizes the divinization of Augustus in conjunction with his military

¹²⁴ Montfaucon 1717, IV.1, 163, tav. 104; Szidat 1997, 24-83; Koeppel 1999; Schäfer 2002, 31-49; 2013 321-3; Trunk 2010, 38, fig. 8; Lange 2016, 175-194. The *tensa* traditionally contained the *exuviae* or images of the gods that were brought to the pulvinar of the Circus Maximus during the *Pompa Circensis*, see Latham 2016, 56-9. Upon the pulvinar, the images of the gods were displayed, cf. Cic. *In Verr.* 2, 1.59., 2, 1.154; Festus 500 L; Suet. *Vesp.* 5.7; Plut. *Coriolan.* 25; Livy 5.41; Dio 47.40;

¹²⁵ It was decreed that a statue of Caesar would be carried in a *tensa* among the rest of the gods to the circus in a chariot, which would later be placed on the Capitoline Hill facing Jupiter, cf. Dio 43.14, 21, 45, 44.6; Suet. *Iul.* 76.

¹²⁶ Schäfer 2002, 4203; 2013, 323; Lange 2016, 175. *Contra* Szidat (1997), who conjectures that the procession is part of the *ovatio* celebrated after the victory at Naulochos against Sextus Pompey in 36, as she considers an Augustan date for the reliefs. Lange (2016, 183) rightly points out that Caesar's *tensa*, which proceeded through the Circus Maximus during the *pompa circensis*, does not make much iconographical sense in relation to the naval commander in front of the chariot, as well as to the Actian theme of the rest of the reliefs.

accomplishments.¹²⁷ The idea that the sacred *tensa* became associated with deification and military victory is corroborated by a series of coins which are evocative of divinization.



Figure 55: Aureus of Octavian with *tensa* on reverse. Ca. 32-29 BCE.

Sometime between 32 and 29 BCE, Augustus had a series of aurei minted that depicts a sacred *tensa* similar to the *tensa* from the Medinaceli group (Fig. 55).¹²⁸ The *tensa* features a prominent pediment above which rests a

miniature quadriga with rider as an acroterium. The *tensa* is decorated in relief depicting two figures, one of which appears to be winged, indicative of Victoria featured on the side of the wagon.¹²⁹ In the exergue is the legend *CAESAR DIVI F*, “Caesar [Augustus], son of a god.”¹³⁰ According to Latham, the sacred *tensa* may allude to the deified Caesar, who was the first human to receive a *tensa*, which had only been associated with gods up until this historical juncture. If this is the case, then the quadriga acroterium that crowns the *tensa* may symbolize Caesar’s successes in warfare through triumph, and the *tensa* represents his deification which followed.

As for comparanda, Nero minted a series of aurei in 54/5, shortly after his succession and the death and divinization of Claudius, who, according to Dio and Tacitus, received all of the same honors which had been conferred upon Augustus, including apotheosis, and whose funeral operated on the same scale as Augustus’ (Fig. 56).¹³¹ The reverse of the series illustrates another sacred *tensa*, similar to the one minted by Augustus. The *tensa* features a decorative pediment upon which a miniature quadriga rests,

¹²⁷ For *exuviae* see Latham 2016, 115. For the funerary procession of Augustus, cf. Suet. *Aug.* 100; Dio (56.34, 42) adduces that the body of Augustus was hidden in a coffin under a couch made of ivory and gold. Nevertheless, both Suetonius and Dio infer that the body of Augustus was a part of the funeral procession, which followed the triumphal route.

¹²⁸ *RIC* 1² *Aug.* 258-9; *BMCRE* 4321-2.

¹²⁹ Latham (2016, 111) suggests that the other figure, on the front of the wagon, is Jupiter, albeit without explication.

¹³⁰ Latham 2016, 111.

¹³¹ Dio 61.35; Tac. *Ann.* 12.69.



Figure 56: Aureus of Nero with Claudius on the obverse and a tensa on the reverse. Ca. 54/5 CE.

flanked by two *Victoriae*, who seem to be crowning the quadriga, likely meant for the rider, the emperor. The body of the *tensa* is also decorated in relief featuring three figures, one of which is clearly a winged *Victoria*, and another, Mattingly presumes, is *Virtus*;

however, the details are not clearly discernable.¹³² Nevertheless, the portrait of Claudius displayed on the obverse, framed by the legend *DIVVS CLAVDIVS AVGVSTVS*, elucidates that this sacred *tensa* belongs to the deified Claudius, whose apotheosis is here celebrated by Nero shortly after Claudius' death. The winged *Victoriae* motif is also indicative of an ideological correlation between triumph and apotheosis. Apropos of the apotheosis of the emperor, in conjunction with receiving a sacred *tensa*, Latham posits that, with the deification of Claudius, an Augustan/Tiberian ceremonial pattern was established by this time.¹³³



Figure 57: Civil Wars denarius with Augustus on the obverse and a tensa on the reverse. Ca. 68/9 CE.

A denarius minted during the civil wars in 68/9 depicts a sacred *tensa* on the reverse, elaborately decorated with similar iconography: the miniature triumphal quadriga on top, flanked by two *Victoriae*, and decorative figural reliefs on the side and front of the *tensa* (Fig. 57). On the obverse

is an image of a laureate portrait of Augustus with the legend *AVGVSTVS DIVI F*, "Augustus, son of a god."

The iconography and date of the issue suggest that this *tensa* was associated with Augustus after his

¹³² *RIC* 1² *Ner.* 4-5; *BMCRE* *Ner.* 4.

¹³³ Latham 2016, 121.

death, and that the *tensa* was among the postmortem honors bestowed upon the deified Augustus, in conjunction with his triumph, attested by the triumphal quadriga crowning his sacred *tensa*.¹³⁴

Furthermore, after his ascension to the throne, Titus had a series of coins minted to honor his deified father Vespasian (**Fig. 58**).¹³⁵ The deified Vespasian is depicted on the obverse, accompanied by the legend *DIVVS AVGVSTVS VESPASIANVS*. On the reverse, once again, is the sacred *tensa* associated with the divinization of the emperor, decorated with mounted *Victoriae* crowning a figure riding in a quadriga, likely the emperor in triumph from victory in warfare, and figural reliefs encompassing the car. Again, it is clear that the



Figure 58: Aureus of Titus with Vespasian on the obverse and a *tensa* on the reverse. Ca. 79-81 CE.

sacred *tensa* was not only ideologically associated with the divinization of the emperor after his death, but that it was also associated with the triumph of the emperor. This seems to suggest that the greatest accomplishments of an emperor were his victories in warfare, culminating with a triumph during his lifetime and the procession of the emperor's sacred *tensa*, after his death, which allegorized the emperor's divinization. Thus, these coins featuring sacred *tensae* in conjunction with the Divus Iulius, the Divus Claudius, the Divus Vespasian, and Augustus himself, lend credence to the interpretation that the sacred *tensa* featured on the Tensa Relief of the Medinaceli group belongs to Divus Augustus and has a triumphal significance in relation to the divinization of the emperor.¹³⁶

The sacred *tensa*, gracefully carried on a four-horse chariot, is guided by Virtus, who pulls the reins of the horses (**Fig. 59**). At first glance, Virtus is unrecognizable, as her image and portrait have been

¹³⁴ *RIC* 1² *Civil Wars* 93; Latham 2016, 114. Latham, *ibid.*, also hypothesizes that Tiberius commissioned a *tensa* for Augustus after his death, although admits that there is no evidence for this in the textual sources.

¹³⁵ *RIC* 1² *Tit.* 360-2; cf. also Latham 2016, 122-3.

¹³⁶ Cf. Szidat (1997, 56-83) for a more detailed analysis of the coins featuring a sacred *tensa* in relation to the divinization of the emperor.

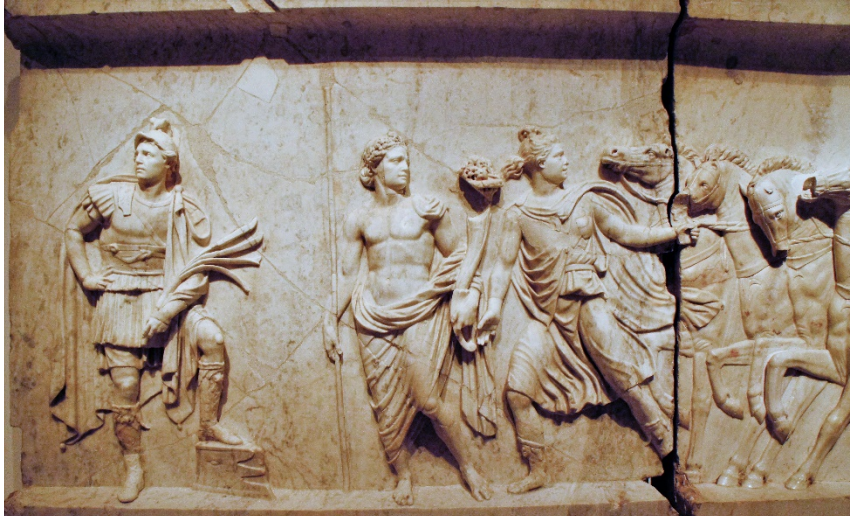


Figure 59: Medinaceli Reliefs: Detail of Honos and Virtus. Ca. 41-54 CE.

heavily restored, yet enough detail survives to secure her identity. Virtus is dressed in her conventional Amazonian tunic, belted at the waist, that divests her right breast (now removed). A *paludamentum* is clasped around her neck, which

is an uncommon attribute for the Virtus typology, but is not unknown.¹³⁷ The head and helmet of Virtus have been replaced with a female head with long, wavy hair; however, there remain vestiges of the original crest from the helmet just above the modern head. The most canonical attribute she possesses is her lion-skin boots, which become standardized in her typology in later imperial art.

To the left of Virtus stands the god Honos, half-draped with his mantle wrapped around his waist and wearing an oak-wreath upon his head. He carries his typical attributes: the cornucopia in the crook of his left arm and a spear in his right hand. The appearance of Honos is unsurprising since Honos has been the divine counterpart of Virtus since the founding of the the cult of Honos and Virtus. Together, the pair leads the *tensa* of the deified Augustus toward a standing naval commander, dressed in a cuirass and helmet, with his left foot on a *rostrum*, or the prow of a ship. In the crook of his left arm, he carries an *aplustre* (*aphlaston*) – the ornamental appendage of the stern of a ship, often associated with Neptune. Because the naval commander does not proceed in the parade, similar to the seated Roma, Schäfer postulates that this naval commander is a representation of a statue of Pompey, who was often

¹³⁷ The Virtus depicted on the so-called “Apotheosis of Lucius Verus” relief from the Great Antonine Altar of Ephesus also wears a *paludamentum*, discussed below.

represented in the guise of Neptune, and whose image also made an appearance during the funeral of Augustus, although this interpretation remains conjectural.¹³⁸

It is certain that Virtus, accompanied by Honos, pulls the reins of the quadriga that carries the *tensa* through a myth-historical procession. What remains inconclusive, however, is what exactly does this *tensa* on the relief symbolize. Szidat has clearly demonstrated that *tensae* in general were wagons containing the sacred objects of the gods, the *exuviae*, which proceeded during the *pompa circensis* to the Circus Maximus, where the objects were displayed on the *pulvinar*, or sacred stand.¹³⁹ However, it is transparent from the iconography of the Medinaceli Reliefs that the *pompa circensis* is not the correct context for the Tensa Relief, namely because of the martial theme of the frieze, which includes the presence of Virtus, as well as the presence of a naval captain. The context of the procession must, then, be understood within the framework of the Augustus' political and military achievements, attested by the appearance of Honos and Virtus. On iconographical grounds, namely the dynastic images of Aeneas fleeing Troy and Romulus carrying the *spolia opima*, Schäfer has determined that the *tensa* must be the allegorical representation of Divus Augustus, who was deified by the senate on the 17th of September, 14 CE.¹⁴⁰ Lange postulates that the procession of the *tensa* references the funeral of Augustus, but cautiously refrains from classifying the procession as the funerary procession of Augustus.¹⁴¹ However, that the Tensa Relief portrays an idealized version of the funerary procession of Augustus, conflated with the divinization of Augustus, is not inconceivable. We know that the relief is already idealized, since it depicts

¹³⁸ Schäfer 2013, 323; On Pompey, see Dio 56.34.1-4. *Contra* Lange (2016, 186-7), who believes that the naval commander is Augustus himself, in the guise of Neptune; but this seems highly unlikely due to the position of the commander within the program, next to the *tensa* of the deified Augustus, and part of a series of static figures, likely statues, past which the triumphal train proceeds. Lange also posits that the commander could be Agrippa, which is a reasonable conjecture, more so than Augustus.

¹³⁹ Szidat 1997; see also Schäfer 2002, 41-2.

¹⁴⁰ Schäfer 2002, 45-6. *Contra* Trunk (2010, 39-41), who argues that the *tensa* symbolizes the deified Caesar; however, placing Divus Iulius within the context of the Battle of Actium is problematic. Statue groups of Aeneas fleeing Troy and of Romulus carrying the *spolia opima* were erected in the Forum of Augustus, lending credence to an allusion to Divus Augustus, who, before he was named *Augustus*, favored the epithet *Romulus*, the founder of Rome, ideologically rendering Augustus the founder of a new Rome, cf. Suet. *Aug.* 7; Dio 53.16.6-8; *Flor.* 4.12.66;

¹⁴¹ Lange 2016, 178-87.

a myth-historical account of a Roman procession wherein historical figures and gods co-operate. And according to Dio, a triumphal chariot did proceed in the funerary procession of Augustus, although it carried a wax image of Augustus, which is not depicted on our *tensa*.¹⁴² Dio also mentions that a likeness of Pompey the Great was also present during the funerary procession, which would lend credence to Schäfer's hypothesis that the naval commander depicted on the Tensa Relief is Pompey in the guise of Neptune. The only problem is that we do not see the images of Augustus' ancestors, nor all of the personified nations Augustus conquered, which Dio describes as succeeding the chariot. Moreover, the *tensa* is not a triumphal chariot in form and function; rather, its architectural elements, namely the large pediment, architrave, and columns that comprise a temple-like structure are indicative of the sacred function of this *tensa*. And if we consider the route of the funerary procession, which is said to have followed the triumphal route, a conflated [myth]-historical narrative is plausible.

According to Suetonius and Tacitus, the funerary procession passed through the Porta Triumphalis, and Dio states that the entire procession followed the triumphal route, only in reverse, which may be considered too coincidental to apply to the two opposing processions on the Medinaceli Reliefs, but not impossible.¹⁴³ However, Suetonius does add that the statue of Victoria from the Curia led the procession, followed by a group of musical boys and girls from *nobilitas*, both of which appear on the reliefs. There is some caution to be taken in avoiding defining the *tensa*-procession as the funeral of Augustus since there is just not enough literary or visual evidence to securely identify a funereal setting; however, the accuracy of the details of both the funeral and the divinization of Augustus are not important for the message to be conveyed to the viewer, namely that Augustus was deified after his death, predicated on his most memorable political and military achievements. Therefore, the memory of Augustus' triumph-like funeral was likely linked to the memory of Augustus' divinization, both of which

¹⁴² Dio 56.34.1-4; see also Lange 2016, 178-9.

¹⁴³ Suet. *Aug.* 100; Tac. *Ann.* 1.8.3; Dio 56.42.1; Lange 2016, 179.

are referenced within the setting of Augustus' greatest military accomplishment – the victory at the Battle of Actium from which his *virtus*, *clementia*, *iustitia*, and *pietas* emanated. Thus, perhaps the *tensa* does symbolize the funerary bed of Augustus, as it proceeded along the Triumphal Way during his funeral.

One last iconographical element depicted in the Tensa Relief lends credence to the theory that the *tensa* allegorically symbolizes the deified Augustus, and one that has significant ideological implications for comprehending the role of Virtus in this scene. Crowning the pediment of the *tensa*, is an eagle, which appears to be spreading its wings, indicative of impending flight. The eagle could simply reference Jupiter; however, since this is not a triumphal chariot, an allusion to Jupiter seems less likely. Lange notes that the eagle was a suitable symbol for the apotheosis of Augustus.¹⁴⁴ And if we consider subsequent examples of apotheoses, such as the “Apotheosis of Claudius” cameo, which features Claudius, dressed in full armor and crowned by Victoria and riding on the back of an eagle to heaven during his apotheosis, and the vault relief from the Arch of Titus, who rides on the back of an eagle, symbolizing his own apotheosis, then it is credible to infer an apotheosis of Augustus for the Tensa Relief.¹⁴⁵

As for the appearance of Virtus in the *tensa* scene, the goddess, accompanied by her companion Honos, pulls the reins of the chariot on which the *tensa* of the deified Augustus is placed. As mentioned above, the clothing of Virtus is slightly different from her conventional Amazonian uniform, namely the addition of the *paludamentum*, or military cloak, fastened at the shoulder and draped across one shoulder and down the back. According to Varro, the *paludamentum* was worn by the general when setting out on campaign, signifying the crossing of the *pomerium* beyond the city limits.¹⁴⁶ That Virtus is setting out on a military campaign dragging the sacred *tensa* of the Divine Augustus onto the battlefield is improbable.

¹⁴⁴ Lange 2016, 183.

¹⁴⁵ The “Apotheosis of Claudius” Cameo is attributed to Skylax. Mid-1st cent. CE. Inv. No. Camee. 265. Cabinet des Médailles, National Library, Paris. For the Arch of Titus, see discussion below (Ch. IV.B).

¹⁴⁶ Varr. 7.37; cf. also Festus s.v.; Suet. *Vitell.* 11; Plin. *Nat. Hist.* 33.63.

However, that Virtus is setting out on a journey carrying with her the Divine Augustus is not inconceivable. If we may consider that the depictions of Honos and Virtus within the *tensa* procession represent, in the most general terms, the political and military accomplishments of the emperor, and that the *tensa* itself represents the Divus Augustus, then it is permissible to suggest that the Tensa Relief illustrates an early imperial conceptualization of an apotheosis scene. That is to say the apotheosis of Augustus, emblemized by the sacred *tensa*, is the ultimate reward for Augustus' life-accomplishments – the product of Augustus' *honos* and *virtus*. Such a scene would be appropriate for a sacred building, such as a proposed temple of Divus Augustus. Therefore, it is no great wonder that Honos and Virtus are given the leading role in Augustus' divinization scene, with an emphasis on Virtus, who assumes her imperial role as divine herald of the emperor, and guides him to his final destination, here the end of the funeral procession, and, as one can imagine, toward the *ustrinum* of Augustus in the Campus Martius, where he will, ultimately, reach the heavens.

The role of Virtus as divine guide of the deified emperor is similar to her role on the Apotheosis of Lucius Verus Relief from the Great Antonine Altar at Ephesus (discussed in detail below). The general scholarly consensus assumes that Lucius Verus ascends to the heavens in his quadriga, on his celestial course chartered by Virtus herself. Virtus not only wears her canonical Amazonian costume, but she also dons the military *paludamentum*, typically reserved for the emperor, clasped around her neck. In fact, the Antonine emperor wears the same *paludamentum* as Virtus. That Virtus, symbolizing military achievement of the emperor, was given a secondary role as guide of the apotheosized emperor is logical. Furthermore, the imperial Roman poet Statius, in his *Thebaid*, evokes the Muse Clio to recount from the annals of antiquity the tale about the one who rouses young men to acknowledge the joy in a glorious death within the context of warfare between the Thebans and the Argives during the siege of Thebes:

The goddess Virtus, a close companion to the throne of Jupiter, from where she is rarely accustomed to be granted access to the world and to the earth, whether the omnipotent Father bestows her, or whether she herself chooses to enter men who are

*deemed worthy, just as then, when she jumped down gleefully from the celestial regions, the bright stars give way to her when she passes by, as well as those fires [the men whom she conferred virtus upon], whom she herself had fixed to the sky.*¹⁴⁷

In his poetic anecdote on the role Dea Virtus plays in the lives of men who are worthy to receive her gift, Statius clearly states that those she possesses she personally guides to the heavens, fixed as stars that burn like fire in the sky.¹⁴⁸ This is reminiscent of the apotheosis of Caesar, who was posthumously deified, and raised to the heavens by Augustus as the *sidus* in Augustan iconography, which was witnessed traversing the sky during the funeral of Caesar in 44. Statius' narrative on the ideological duty of Virtus as guide of divinized men elucidates the presence of Virtus both within the Apotheosis of Lucius Verus relief and within the Tensa Relief of the Medinaceli group. Moreover, as I have discussed above, Cicero, in a speech delivered in 46 to the senate in order to provoke Caesar to show clemency toward Marcus Claudius Marcellus, consul of 51, for slighting Caesar during the Civil Wars, evokes the martial *virtus* of Caesar, calling it "divine" (*divina*), and alluding to the role martial *virtus* plays in acquiring fame, glory, and eventually, immortality. Cicero addresses Caesar:

But if this, Caesar, was to be the result of your immortality (*rerum tuarum immortalium*), that, after conquering the enemies, you should leave the Republic in the condition it is now, then, look, I implore you, lest your divine martial valor (*tua divina virtus*) be considered more a marvel rather than considered glory (*gloriae*) itself, for, indeed, glory (*gloria*) is the illustrious and wide-spread fame (*fama*) merited by great deeds accomplished on behalf of his own people, or the *patria*, or the entire race of man.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Stat. *Theb.* 10.632-8: *Diva Iovis solio iuxta comes, unde per orbem rara dari terrisque solet contingere, Virtus, seu pater omnipotens tribuit, sive ipsa capaces elegit penetrare viros, caelestibus ut tunc desiluit gavisus plagis—dant clara meanti astra locum quosque ipsa polis affixerat ignes; iamque premit terras, nec vultus ab aethere longe.* *Ignes* here refers to her chosen "heroes."

¹⁴⁸ Mattingly (1930, xci, no. 2) is the first to draw attention to this passage in the *Thebaid*, stating that Virtus executes Jupiter's missions and that Domitian is one of the *virī capaces*, or men worthy of being chosen by Virtus. Milhous (1992, 175-6, 313-4) goes a step further and hypothesizes that literary representations of Dea Virtus in the imperial literary tradition also possessed ideological implications of immortality, and that, when Virtus is found in a funerary context, she emphasizes that the deceased honored by her presence is worthy of immortality.

¹⁴⁹ Cic. *Marc.* 26: *Quod si rerum tuarum immortalium, C. Caesar, hic exitus futurus fuit, ut devictis adversariis rem publicam in eo statu relinqueres, in quo nunc est, vide, quaeso, ne tua divina virtus admirationis plus sit habitura quam gloriae; si quidem gloria est inlustris ac pervagata magnorum vel in suos vel in patriam vel in omne genus hominum fama meritorum.* Cicero mentions his *divina virtus* again in *Philippics* 14.12.

Although Cicero couches his criticisms of Caesar within his flatteries, he nevertheless addresses the martial *virtus* of Caesar, defining it as *divina*, in an attempt to convince Caesar that his *divina virtus* from his previous military exploits was already enough to warrant the fame and glory he needed to achieve immortality. Cicero's rhetoric on *virtus* as a divine quality that leads an individual toward glory, fame, and immortality demonstrates that acquiring martial *virtus* was considered the ideological agency in which glory, fame, and immortality could be achieved. Thus, it is not difficult to understand why Virtus was chosen to guide the deified Augustus toward immortality on the Tensa Relief of the Medinaceli group.

Beginning in the Julio-Claudian period, Virtus received two jobs during her tenure in imperial art, albeit they may have been understood as one and the same: Virtus as herald of the emperor after achieving victory in war; and Virtus as guide of the emperor after achieving apotheosis as a result of his victory in war. That is not to say, *virtus* acquired in victory during war was not the only path to apotheosis, but that it was, indeed, one path to apotheosis, and probably the most glorious path to immortality.¹⁵⁰

The Medinaceli Reliefs, albeit incomplete, constitute an articulate sculptural program, punctuating not only the greatest military accomplishments of Augustus, namely his decisive victory at the Battle of Actium, but also the consequences of victory in a foreign war: the acquired fame, honor, glory, and apotheosis made possible by the emperor's martial capacity, his *virtus*. Therefore, the presence of the goddess Virtus within the sculptural friezes is integral to the emperors's ideological program of victory and apotheosis. Her appearance in the triumphal procession, etched between the Egyptian captive and the emperor, epitomizes both the absence of *virtus* among the defeated and the acquisition of *virtus* by the victor – a type of ideological *spolium* that is suitably presented in a propagandistic parade of war booty and acquisitions. The image of the goddess herself, however, is not meant to invoke an objectified

¹⁵⁰ And if representations of Virtus in Roman art can be understood with connotations of immortality, then this may be the reason why her image became a popular motif depicted on Roman sarcophagi in funerary contexts beginning in the mid-2nd century CE, predicated on the Julio-Claudian-established conception of Virtus as the emperor's guide to glory, both martial and eternal. See Milhous (1992, 170-225), who has compiled a list of known Roman sarcophagi featuring Virtus.

possession of the Romans, but is rather meant to be seen as a divine entity who has instead chosen, by her own free will, to side with the Roman emperor, sanctifying his *virtus* he procured in warfare. Moreover, the image of Virtus as herald of the emperor conveys that it is the emperor's inherent characteristic *virtus* that leads him to martial renown, securing his reputation as a competent emperor who is worthy of receiving honor, glory and eternal memory, perpetuated in stone. During the Julio-Claudian era, the image of Virtus would have made a useful propagandistic tool for the emperor to employ in his visual programs centered around the environs of Rome – the home of Virtus and where the goddess was most familiar in order to justify his martial superiority. Therefore, I do not believe that the image of Virtus depicted in the Triumph Relief of the Medinaceli group is the earliest manifestation of this imperial role of hers as the divine herald of the emperor, especially if these reliefs derive from a monument in Campania. Nevertheless, the message conveyed to the Roman people is the same.

Moreover, the image of Virtus was unequivocally employed to communicate to the Roman viewer that Augustus possessed the military capability to maintain the safety and security of the Roman state from external threat.¹⁵¹ The emperor's *virtus*, personified by the goddess herself, has nullified the threat of "the other", here the Egyptians, attested by her placement next to the conquered Egyptian slave, visually indicating that she keeps the enemy subordinate. The most transparent understanding of the Triumph Relief featuring Virtus is the promise of Augustan peace. Safety, security, and peace are preserved through the *virtus* of the emperor, leading to the Roman people's approval of his administration, as well as the perpetuity of the emperor's memory through visual immortality.

The immortality of Augustus' legacy is exemplified by the Tensa Relief, which alludes to the apotheosis of Augustus, validated by the presence of Virtus, who leads those she deems worthy of her attribute to immortality. Even if the Tensa Relief does not depict a conventional apotheosis scene with

¹⁵¹ See Caes. *Gall.* 2.33, 3.5 and 3.20 for the passages in which he states that safety and security depend on *virtus*.

which we are familiar from the subsequent representations of apotheoses in imperial art, the visual allusion to the divinization of Augustus is clear. Augustus reached deification through his political and military exploits, personified by the attendance of Honos and Virtus, who guides the divine Augustus to his final destination – fixed to the stars that burn like fire in the sky.

III.IV: The *Virtus* of Augustus

Even though the Medinaceli Reliefs were not commissioned by Augustus himself, there is some conclusive evidence to suggest that Augustus became more attentive to his own *virtus*, as well as the cult of Virtus during his principate. After Augustus received *imperium* and consolidated his power over both political and military affairs in Rome, the senate and the people began to recognize his *virtus*, thereby legitimizing his sovereignty. Not only did the senate gift to Augustus the *clipeus virtutis* in 27, but coins were minted both in Rome and in the colonies,



Figure 60: Denarius of Augustus featuring Augustus on the obverse and a trophy and spoils on the reverse. Ca. 25-23 BCE.



Figure 61: Denarius of Augustus featuring Augustus on the obverse and a prisoner and trophy on the reverse. Ca. 25-23 BCE.

celebrating his *virtus* of their new head-of-state and commander-in-chief. Augustus' legate from the Roman colony of Augusta Emerita in Hispania minted a series of denarii, dating to ca. 25-23 BCE, which feature Augustus in profile, accompanied by the legend *IMP[ERATOR] CAESAR AVGVSTVS* on the obverse (**Fig. 60**). On the reverse stands a trophy, an emblem of *virtus*, comprising the weapons and armor of the enemy and mounted on a pile of military spoils.¹⁵² The message is clear: the adversaries of Rome have

¹⁵² The legend on the reverse is that of the moneyer: *P CARISIVS LEG PRO PR*. See *RIC* 1² Aug. 5; Jones 1990, 309.

been subjugated by the *imperator* Caesar Augustus, whose *virtus* rises above those whom he conquered, thereby creating a visual hierarchy of power. Similar to the coins minted by Caesar, which celebrated his own personal *virtus* during his expeditions in Gaul, Augusta Emerita also minted a contemporaneous issue featuring a fettered prisoner of war, above whom stands a very large military trophy (**Fig. 61**).¹⁵³ The prisoner, hands bound behind his back, is depicted on one knee, completely naked. His vulnerability, in conjunction with the weapon and armor which the enemy captive once donned, symbolizes not only the enemy's loss of *virtus*, but also the acquisition of *virtus* by Augustus, whose head, decorated with the laurel crown of victory, is depicted on the obverse. In Rome, Augustus himself began minting coins celebrating his own *virtus* acquired from the Battle of Actium with representations of trophies on the reverses. On a series of denarii he minted in 30/29, a Roman trophy, flanked by the legend *IMP[ERATOR] CAESAR* is mounted on a *rostrum*, symbolizing the *virtus* that manifested from the enemy ships defeated at the Battle of Actium (**Fig. 62**).¹⁵⁴



Figure 62: Denarius of Augustus, featuring a trophy and rostrum on the reverse. 30/29 BCE.

A more direct indication that Augustus took an interest in the cult of Virtus derives from the fact that he changed the date of the festival of Honos and Virtus from the 17th of July to the 29th of May in 17 BCE, the year of the Saecular Games.¹⁵⁵ Weinstock has argued that Augustus changed the date of the festival to coincide with the start of the Saecular Games on the 1st of June, thereby ideologically linking the two festivals.¹⁵⁶ However,

Augustus' interest in the cult of Honos and Virtus may have stemmed from

previous events in 19, namely the recovery of the captured standards lost by Crassus in 53 by the

¹⁵³ *RIC* 1² Aug. 6. The legends are same as the above.

¹⁵⁴ *RIC* 1² Aug. 265a; *BMCRE* 625; *BMCRR* 4352; *RCV* 1.1556 (Sear 2000, 300).

¹⁵⁵ Dio 54.18. For the original date of the festival of Honos on the 17th of July, cf. *Fasti Antiates: HONORI*. The festival on the 29th of May is mentioned in the *Fasti Philocalianis*.

¹⁵⁶ Weinstock, *JRS* 51 (1961), 211.

Parthians, and by Antony during his Parthian campaign in the 30s.¹⁵⁷ According to Dio, Augustus took great pride in this achievement and rejoiced as if he had conquered the Parthians in war; and, subsequently, he entered Rome on horseback (as in an *ovatio* and/or *adventus*), where he deposited the standards in the Capitoline shrine of Mars Ultor in imitation of the ritual of the depositing of the *spolia opima* in the Temple of Jupiter Feretrius.¹⁵⁸ In this way, Augustus was affiliating himself both with the martial success of both Romulus and Marcellus, who not only obtained the *spolia opima*, but also founded the cult of Honos and Virtus at the Porta Capena.

Moreover, of all the honors awarded to him for recovering the standards, Augustus only accepted a commemorative arch (the so-called Parthian Arch) erected in the Forum and an altar dedicated to Fortuna Redux, the “Home-Bringer.”¹⁵⁹ Augustus himself tells us that the senate consecrated the Altar of Fortuna Redux on the 16th of December in front of the Temple of Honos and Virtus at the Porta Capena for his return from Parthia, implying that the Porta Capena was the gate from which he entered the city.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, placing the altar celebrating his return from his diplomatic victory over the Parthians at the site of the Temple of Honos and Virtus must have carried ideological implications. That the altar was deliberately placed at the site of Augustus’ *adventus*, or arrival, into the city – the Porta Capena, where he would have begun his celebratory parade – is plausible, especially if we reflect on the performative role which Virtus was given on the Medinaceli Reliefs as the leader of the emperor as he proceeded through Rome. Moreover, Fortuna Redux, “the Home-Bringer,” or, more literally, “the One who Leads Back,” shares a similar role with Virtus in the way that they both contribute to the emperor’s return home from abroad. And since this was not a triumphal return for Augustus, but a probable *ovatio*, entering the

¹⁵⁷ Augustus, accompanied by his stepson Tiberius, led a diplomatic expedition backed by his military force to Parthia and to Armenia in 20/19, where he was able to effectively recover the lost standards without a drop of blood spilled: Aug. *RG* 29. Vell. Pat. 2.91; 2.119.

¹⁵⁸ Dio 54.8. Dio does not specify an *ovatio* but characterizes and *ovatio* by mentioning that the senate and people still made preparations to greet Augustus on horseback, even though he entered the city at night.

¹⁵⁹ Dio 54.8; 54.10; Aug. *RG* 11; Richardson 2012, 110. For Parthian Arch, cf. Rich 1998; Cornwell 2017, 132-9.

¹⁶⁰ *Fasti Amiternini* for the 16th of December. *Contra* the Calendar at Cumae which places the dedication on the 15th of December.

city through the Porta Capena rather than through the Porta Triumphalis is logical, since the Porta Capena still possessed connotations of military victory, and may have been the designated gate used for *ovationes*.¹⁶¹ The Porta Capena was certainly the gate used by Marcellus when he returned to Rome to celebrate his *ovatio* for the sack of Syracuse in 212/1, the day after he celebrated a triumph on the Alban Mount, which must have contributed to his decision to found the cult of Virtus there.¹⁶² Lange also posits the possibility that Caesar entered the city through the Porta Capena after celebrating his *ovatio* on the Alban Mount in 44.¹⁶³ And it is not inconceivable that Octavian, when he celebrated his *ovatio* for his victory over Sextus Pompey at the Battle of Naulochus in Sicily in 36, entered Rome through its southern gate, the Porta Capena, as he entered the city on horseback in the tradition of an *ovatio*.¹⁶⁴ By decree of Augustus himself, the *pontifices* and the Vestals Virgins were obliged to make an annual sacrifice on the 12th of October on the Altar of Fortuna Redux in front of the Temple of Honos and Virtus, the celebration of which was named the *Augustalia* in honor of Augustus' return to Rome from his successful campaigns in the east.¹⁶⁵ Thus, the Altar of Fortuna Redux stood in front of the Temple of Honos and Virtus as an emblem of Augustus' triumph for his military campaigns in the east, symbolically linking his *ovatio* and his

adventus with the Porta Capena, and more, specifically, with Honos and Virtus.



Figure 63: Aureus of Augustus featuring the Parthian standards and the clipeus virtutis on the reverse. Ca. 19 BCE.

Immediately after his return to Rome in 19, and after celebrating his *ovatio*, Augustus' colonies in Hispania began to mint issues of coins featuring the recovered standards in connection with the *clipeus virtutis*, commemorating Augustus' rescue of the standards from the

¹⁶¹ Torelli (1982, 29) believes that this is where the people customarily greeted the *profectio* to *provinciae* and the *reditus* from *provinciae* of the proconsuls.

¹⁶² Cf. Livy 26.21.6.

¹⁶³ Lange 2016, 166-7; *Fasti Triumphales* for 44.

¹⁶⁴ Suet. *Aug.* 22; App. *BC* 5.130; Dio 49.15-6.

¹⁶⁵ Aug. *RG* 11; Dio 54.10; *Fasti Amiternini* for the 12th of October.

Parthians. The Roman colony of Colonia Patricia (Cordoba) minted a series of aurei that depicts Augustus in profile with the legend *CAESAR AVGVSTVS* and, on the reverse, the *clipeus virtutis*, flanked by the recovered standards, and surrounded by the legends *SPQR* and *SIGNIS RECEPTIS*, “the standards have been recovered” (Fig. 63).¹⁶⁶ That the standards recovered by Augustus during his expedition to the east are set within the context of Augustus’ inherent martial *virtus* is clear.



Figure 64: Denarius of Augustus, featuring Virtus on the obverse and Augustus in triumph on the reverse. Ca. 19 BCE.

In Rome, Augustus’ monetary triumvir Lucius Aquillius Florus began minting extensive series of coins commemorating the military achievements for Augustus, including issues celebrating his triumphs, his recovered standards, and his *virtus*. For the first time since 70 BCE, issues of coins depicting Virtus were

minted in Rome during the Augustan principate, ca. 19. After Augustus returned to Rome from the east in 19, Florus minted an issue of denarii depicting the image of Virtus in profile on the obverse (Fig. 64). The goddess can be identified by her old-fashioned crested bell helmet with decorative feather appended to the side. Moreover, this particular image of Virtus was a familial die, adopted from her likeness minted on issues produced by the progenitor of Aquillius, Manius Aquillius, in 71, the only difference being that the legend was reformed to the moneyer’s name and title rather than the legend *VIRTVS* of 71.¹⁶⁷ On the reverse, Augustus, identified by the legend *AVGVSTVS CAESAR* and holding the laurel of victory, rides in a chariot drawn by two elephants – an allusion to Augustus’ Parthian Settlement.¹⁶⁸ This is the earliest

¹⁶⁶ *RIC* 1² Aug. 85a; *RCV* 1.1633; Zanker 1988, 96, fig. 80c.

¹⁶⁷ Babelon 1885-1886, 216, no. 12; *RIC* 1² Aug. 301; *BMCR* 2.4545; *BMCRE* 1.36-7; Stevenson 1982, 880; Jones 1990, 322; *CNR* 34-5 (Banti 1973, 179). The reverse legend reads the name of the moneyer *L[VCIVS] AQVILLIVS FLORVS IIIVIR*.

¹⁶⁸ Although there exists no literary evidence to suggest that Augustus ever triumphed in a chariot pulled by elephants, there exists iconographical evidence to suggest that the honor was awarded to him. Issues of aurei minted in Colonia Patricia (Cordoba) depict Augustus on the obverse, identified by the legend *SPQR IMP[ERATORI] CAESARI*, and a triumphal arch over a viaduct mounted with a chariot of elephants, the rider of which is Augustus, crowned by a winged Victoria: *RIC* 1² Aug. 140; *BMCRE* 432. Legend on the reverse: *QVOD VIAE MVN[ITAE] SVNT*, “because the roads have been constructed.” Although the aureus appears to commemorate Augustus’ benefaction towards the fortification of the roads, the iconography suggests that there existed a precedent for depicting the emperor in a triumphal chariot pulled by elephants rather than horses. The

artistic attestation of the image of the goddess in connection with the image of the emperor in the visual arts, thereby publicly associating the emperor with the cult of Virtus. A contemporaneous issue was minted by Augustus' moneyer Aquillius that features the same Virtus-type on the obverse with the legend of the moneyer, and, on the reverse, an image of a kneeling Parthian in trousers and wearing a cloak, who proffers the lost Roman standards and a *vexillum* labeled "X", attested by the legend *CAESAR AVGVSTVS SIGN[NIS] RECE[PTIS]*, "Caesar Augustus, with the standards recovered" (Fig. 65)¹⁶⁹ That the *virtus* of Augustus is commemorated with this imperial issue within the context of Augustus' victory over the Parthians by the recovery of the standards is unequivocal. This Aquillian issue is rather important because it marks the first time that Augustus' recovery of the standards from the Parthians is framed by the cult



Figure 65: Drawing of a denarius of Augustus, featuring Virtus on the obverse and a Parthian captive proffering the standards on the reverse. Ca. 19 BCE.

of Virtus. The issue demonstrates that Augustus considered his victory over the Parthians more than diplomatic, being also martial. The fact that, on the reverse, the Parthian kneels as a suppliant as he returns the standards to the Romans emphasizes the inferiority of the

Parthians in military capacity, i.e. their inferiority in *virtus*, who may not have capitulated so quickly had it not been for the presence of Augustus' martial forces during the Parthian Settlement behind the

iconography alludes to Augustus' restoration of the Via Flaminia from Rome to Ariminum (Rimini) in 27, the beginning and end of which were demarcated by two arches, one in Rome and one in Ariminum: Aug. *RG* 20; *EJ* 286 = *ILS* 84, the inscription of which comes from the honorific arch in Rimini, cf. Cooley 2003, 254-5; Dio 53.22. It is possible that there was an honorific arch on the Via Flaminia in Rome that was mounted by the triumphal chariot of Augustus pulled by elephants, which provided stimulus to represent Augustus in an elephants-drawn chariot on Aquillius' denarius of ca. 19 in order to commemorate his diplomatic victory in the east. Another reverse, depicts the same obverse and the same legend on the reverse, but the reverse depicts the emperor in horse-drawn chariot mounted on an arch, perhaps alluding to the second Flaminian arch: *RIC* 1² Aug. 144-5.

¹⁶⁹ The *vexillum* labeled "X" likely symbolizes the Tenth Legion, which Antony took to Armenia during his Parthian expedition, where his forces lost the standards. Babelon, 1885-1886, 216-7, no. 8; *RIC* 1² Aug. 305. *BMCR* 4549, no. 1; *BMCRE* 39, see note *; *CNR* 46 (Banti 1973, 184).

emperor.¹⁷⁰ As for the obverse, the image of Virtus underscores the martial capacity of Augustus and the Romans, whom the goddess is made to favor over the Parthians.



Figure 66: Denarius of Augustus, featuring Virtus on the obverse and a kneeling Armenian on the reverse. Ca. 19 BCE.



Figure 67: Denarius of Augustus, featuring Virtus on the obverse and an Armenian prisoner on the reverse. Ca. 19 BCE.

The *virtus* of Augustus is also highlighted by another issue of coins minted by the emperor's moneyer Aquillius, however, not for Augustus' victory over the Parthians, but rather for his victory over the Armenians (**Fig. 66**). The coin features the same Virtus-type on the obverse, and, on the reverse, an Armenian kneels as a suppliant and extends his hands in a gesture of petitioning for clemency. The legends reads *CAESAR DIVI F ARME CAPT*, "Caesar [Augustus], son of a god, with captured Armenia."¹⁷¹ Another issue demonstrates the same iconography with a slightly different

Armenian figure on the reverse, who stands rather than kneels (**Fig. 67**). The legend reads: *CAESAR DIVI F ARMINIA CAPTA*, "Caesar, son of a god, with Armenia having been captured."¹⁷²

Lastly, there was one final Aquillian issue featuring the goddess Virtus, but the coin is now lost. A bust of Virtus, analogous to Aquillian Virtus-type, was portrayed on the obverse with the legend of Aquillius, and, on the reverse, a double-wreath positioned between two laurel branches was depicted, accompanied by the legend *CAESAR AVGVTVS* and *OB CIVIS SER[VATOS]*, "Caesar Augustus, for having

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Vell. Pat. 2.101 for the spectacle of Augustus' forces during the Parthian Settlement.

¹⁷¹ Babelon 1885-1886, 216, no. 6; *RIC* 1² Aug. 306; *BMCRR* 4547-8; *CNR* 47-8 (Banti 1973, 184-5).

¹⁷² Babelon 1885-1886, 216, no. 7; *RIC* 1² Aug. 307; *BMCRE* 44; *CNR* 49 (Banti 1973, 185).

saved the citizens.”¹⁷³ This legend likely refers to the recovery of some of the ten thousand Roman soldiers held captive by the Parthians when Crassus was defeated at the Battle of Carrhae in 53 and when the standards were lost, crediting Augustus, as well as his *virtus*, with the victory of saving Rome’s martial citizens during the Parthian Settlement.¹⁷⁴ Thus, by the *virtus* of Augustus, the safety of the Romans and the security of Rome had been restored.



Figure 68: Aureus of Augustus, featuring Honos on the obverse and a wreath with the legend “Caesar Augustus, for having saved the citizens” on the reverse. Ca. 19 BCE.

As a pendant issue to the Aquillian series, M. Durmius, one of Augustus’ other moneyers and colleague of L. Aquillius Florus, struck the same reverse types as the Aquillian types above, however, Honos is featured on the obverse, complementing his colleague’s Virtus

series (**Fig. 68**).¹⁷⁵ Honos, in profile and flanked by two six-pointed stars, is represented as a youth with fillet, and no other identifying attributes, except for the legend *M DVRMIVS IIIIVIR HONORI*. It is interesting to note that Honos is written in the dative, “for Honos,” suggesting that Augustus’ martial exploits on the reverses of these series were undertaken for the sake of acquiring *honos* by honoring the god directly. Unfortunately, the Aquillian Virtus is unlabeled, but if she were, we can imagine, as pendant to the Honos-series, that Virtus would have also been written in the dative *VIRTUTI*, “for Virtus,” i.e. for the goddess whose divine gift made Augustus’ martial accomplishments a reality.

This issue, in conjunction with all of the Virtus-type issues minted by Augustus’ money Aquillius, establishes a programmatic visual narrative of Augustan propaganda, exploiting Augustus’ contemporary political achievements through a martial lens. The emperor of Rome is coupled with his *virtus*, as well as

¹⁷³ Cf. *BMCR* 4542, no. 1, p. 68; *BMCRE* 35, note *; *CNR* 36 (Banti 1973, 180). Similar reverses were minted by Aquillius with a different obverse, one with a *triskelis*, cf. Babelon 1885-1886, 216, no. 14; *BMCRE* 4542; *BMCRE* 35; *CNR* 37 (Banti 1973, 180).

¹⁷⁴ Plutarch (*Cras.* 31) reports that ten thousand Roman prisoners were taken alive by the Parthians.

¹⁷⁵ *RIC* 1² *Aug.* 311-5; *BMCRE Aug.* 51-9; *CNR* 34-5 (Banti 1973, 179).

his *honos*, personified by the divinities themselves, through a public medium. And those in Rome who may have recognized the image of Honos and Virtus from their cult statues in Marcellus' Temple of Honos at the Porta Capena, in Marius' Temple of Honos and Virtus, and in Pompey's shrine in the Theater of Pompey, as well as on the Republican Honos-and-Virtus-type and Virtus-type coins minted earlier in the 1st century with the legend *VIRTVS*, would have understood three things: that their images appear in connection with a martial event; that their images are represented within the context of a victory; and that their images symbolize the political and martial excellence of the victor, in this case Augustus. The coupling of Virtus and Honos with the emperor demonstrates that the emperor's own political and martial faculties, his *honos* and his *virtus*, were responsible, at least in part, for his diplomatic and military victories. Moreover, this last Honos/Virtus-type issue, marked with the legend "Caesar Augustus, for having saved the citizens," connects Honos and Virtus with the security of the Roman people. That is to say the images of gods also provoke the Roman viewer to place the *honos* and *virtus* of the emperor within the ideological framework of the people's well-being, the *salus publica*. The Aquillian and Durmian series of coins affirm that the public recognized the images of Honos and Virtus in association with Augustus and his martial deeds. In the service of the people, Augustus ruled Rome with his *honos* and defended her with his *virtus*, without which he would not have been able to pledge the preservation of peace.

III.V: The Ara Pacis Augustae and the Virtus of Augustus

Peace was a virtue first visually identified with Caesar. In 44, Caesar's moneyer Lucius Aemilius Buca minted a series of quinarii that celebrated *pax* in connection with Caesar's consolidation of power and the end of the civil wars. The reverse depicts a *dextrarum iunctio* and the obverse illustrates a bust of the personification Pax – an unremarkable profile of a woman with short hair and no attributes – accompanied by the legend *PAXS*.¹⁷⁶ Although peace did not last long in 44, its personification was resurrected by Augustus around the time of his victory at Actium. On a series of denarii dated ca. 32-29,

¹⁷⁶ Reverse legend: *L. AEMILIVS BVCA III VIR*. *RRC* 480.24; Crawford 1974, 494; Weinstock 267, 267-9; Cornwell 2017, 53-4.

the head of Augustus was placed on the obverse; and, on the reverse, the personification Pax wields an olive branch in her right and a cornucopia in her left, attended by the legend, *CAESAR DIVI F.*¹⁷⁷ Even though Augustus never lost sight of Pax, it was not until 13 when he founded her cult at the Ara Pacis Augustae, after his return to Rome from his military campaigns in the west.¹⁷⁸

In August of 16, Augustus set out on a military campaign toward the west because, according to Dio, he had remained too long in the city of Rome, where his reputation was deteriorating.¹⁷⁹ Thus, in order to maintain his political and military standing with the people, Augustus rushed to the west in order to defuse a resurgence of war in Gaul, where a legate, Marcus Lollius, suffered a defeat, losing a standard of the Fifth Legion. When Augustus arrived, the Germans immediately withdrew and sued for peace, resulting in a small, bloodless victory for Augustus.¹⁸⁰ Thereafter, on administrative business, Augustus spent some time in Spain where he colonized numerous cities.¹⁸¹ Then, in 13, Augustus safely returned to Rome, as he himself reports, having successfully restored law and order to the provinces of Spain and Gaul, after which the senate consecrated an altar to Augustan peace in honor of his return.¹⁸²

The Ara Pacis Augustae, constructed between 13 and 9, stood on the Via Flaminia as a visual testament to the proliferation of the *pax Augusta*, or the pacification of the greater Roman empire during the principate of Augustus, without whose *virtus* his military victories in the provinces would not have been possible and Roman safety would not have been secured.¹⁸³ Moreover, the altar was located outside of the *pomerium* in the Campus Martius, where a magistrate's power of *imperium domi* transitions to his

¹⁷⁷ RIC 1² Aug. 252; Galinsky 1996, 148. Another coin featuring Augustus and Pax was minted in Ephesus around 28 where she appears to be standing on a *parazonium*, wielding a caduceus, and is accompanied by a *cista mystica* on the reverse. She is, nevertheless, labeled PAX, cf. RIC 1² Aug. 476; BMCRR 248; Gruen 1985, 59; Cornwell 2017, 116-7.

¹⁷⁸ Weinstock 1972, 269.

¹⁷⁹ Dio 54.19; Ovid *Fast.* 6.795-6.

¹⁸⁰ Dio 54.20; Vell. Pat. 2.97; Suet. *Aug.* 23.1; Richardson 2012, 126-7.

¹⁸¹ Dio 54.23; Richardson 2012, 129.

¹⁸² Aug. *RG* 12; see also Dio 54.25; *Fasti Praenestini* for January 30th; *Fasti Amiternini* for July 4th; Calendar at Cumae for January 30th.

¹⁸³ For *pax Augusta*, cf. Weinstock 1960; Gruen 1985, 59-60; Cornwell 2017; 155-86.

imperium militiae, the construction of which was ideologically designed with two open-air thresholds in reminiscence of the shrine of Janus Quirinus, whose dual thresholds were closed only when war concluded and peace prevailed.¹⁸⁴ And the themes of war depicted in the visual program of the Ara Pacis were likely not lost on the viewer. The Southwest Panel illustrating Aeneas performing a sacrifice over an altar to the Di Penates alludes to the homecoming of Aeneas from the battlefield as a visual analogue to the *adventus* of Augustus from his military campaigns in Spain and Gaul.¹⁸⁵ The Northwest Panel depicting the suckling twins Romulus and Remus feature their father Mars, the god of war himself. And *pax*, depicted on the Southeast Panel as a goddess of fertility and abundance, most likely a composite goddess of Pax, Tellus Italiae, and, perhaps, Venus, persuades the viewer to reflect on the public benefits of victory in warfare.¹⁸⁶ Thus, although the Ara Pacis monumentalized the *pax Augusta* as an altar with ideological implications of Augustan *pietas*, it was just as much a victory monument containing allusions to Augustan *virtus*, without which peace could not have been achieved.¹⁸⁷ And since both *pietas* and *virtus* were intrinsic virtues of Augustus, recognized by the *clipeus virtutis* in 27, that the Ara Pacis incorporated visual



Figure 69: Ara Pacis: Northeast Panel. 13-9 BCE.

references to the *virtus Augusta*, one of the four cardinal virtues of Augustus, is appropriate, if not expected on such a monument of war and peace.

¹⁸⁴ Torelli 1982, 29, 32; on the closing of the shrine of Janus: Aug. *RG* 16; Livy 1.19; Ovid *Fast.* 1.277-81; Orosius 7.3.7 = Tac. *Hist.* fragment 4; cf. also Simon 1968, 9.

¹⁸⁵ Torelli 1982, 43; Gruen 1985, 62.

¹⁸⁶ For Tellus, cf. Toynbee 1967, 140-3 and pl. 31, no. 3.

¹⁸⁷ Torelli (1982, 33) argues that the altar was undoubtedly a triumphal monument for an accomplishment for which Augustus refused a triumph, similar to the Altar of Fortuna Redux. La Rocca (1983, 49) similarly calls the altar a product of a triumph. See also Ovid *Fast.* 1.709-22 on the altar as a triumphal monument.



Figure 70: Relief from Carthage with seated Roma. 1st c. CE.

The inference that Virtus was depicted on the Ara Pacis is, admittedly, conjectural; however, there exists circumstantial evidence that supports the inclusion of Virtus on the Northeast Panel with Roma. The Northeast Panel depicts the goddess Roma, seated on a pile of weapons, attested by a fragment featuring part of a shield

placed behind her left leg and a second fragment depicting the sumptuous folds of her drapery over her thighs (Fig. 69). There are no other extant fragments; and her reconstruction is profoundly contingent upon pre-existing and contemporary representations of a seated Roma in numismatics and in sculpture, namely from the Zoilos Monument of Aphrodisias, as well as the 1st-century CE marble Altar of the Gens Augusta from Carthage in the Bardo Museum (Fig. 70).¹⁸⁸ If Roma depicted on the altar from Carthage is representative of Roma from the Ara Pacis, then we can reconstitute the missing attributes of Roma of the Northeast panel. Roma, seated on a pile of armor, wears a crested helmet and a long chiton, unbelted at the waist, which exposes her right breast and heavily drapes down past her knees to her shoes. It is essential to note that Roma is a matronly figure and does not wear a short, belted Amazonian tunic as Virtus habitually does. In the crook of her left arm, Roma cradles a *parazonium*, and, in the palm of her right hand, a victoriola alights on a base supporting a shield, ostensibly an allusion to the *clipeus virtutis* and the Victoria erected in the Curia in 27.¹⁸⁹ The iconography of Roma on the altar from Carthage is comparable to that on a series of coins minted by Nero in 64/5



Figure 71: Aureus of Nero, featuring a seated Roma. 64/5 CE.

¹⁸⁸ Cagnat, R. 1913. *Un Temple de la Gens Augusta à Carthage*. Comptes-rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres 9, 680-6; Cornwell, 2017, 169.

¹⁸⁹ Cornwell 2017, 169.

CE (**Fig. 71**).¹⁹⁰ Roma, seated on a pile of spoliated arms and armor, wears a crested helmet and a long, unbelted chiton that is bunched on her lap, drapes just passed the right knee, and exposes her right breast. The fact that she proffers a victoriola in her right hand just as she does on the altar from Carthage lends credence to the probability that these images of Roma were replicated from the Ara Pacis. That Roma is depicted as a seated matron on the Northeast Panel of the Ara Pacis is predictable, evidenced by her image as a seated matron on the didrachm of Locri Epizephyrii minted in the late-3rd century BCE on the denarius of Fabius Pictor minted in 126 BCE, on a denarius from Rome in 115-4 BCE, on the Monument of Zoilos from Aphrodisias, on the Actian Monument of 27, on the Gemma Augustea, and on one of the reliefs from the Medinaceli group dating to the Claudian Period.

When the altar was reconstructed in 1938, a head of a young male was erroneously applied to the Southwest Panel featuring Aeneas sacrificing to the Di Penates as the possible head of Iulus; however,



Figure 72: Ara Pacis: Marble fragment of the head of Honos from the Northeast Panel. 13-9 BCE.

the head did not fit the body, and the remnants of the cornucopia he once carried in his left hand behind his head are not iconographically appropriate for Iulus (**Fig. 72**). The head of the youth has now been correctly attributed to the Northeast Panel as a companion to Roma. Once conjectured to belong to the Genius Populi Romani, the youth is now universally accepted to represent Honos.¹⁹¹ Although both figures carry a cornucopia in their subsequent imperial typology, the Genius Populi Romani had only appeared as an older, bearded male on coins of the 1st century BCE.¹⁹² The Genius Populi Romani only

¹⁹⁰ *BMCRE* Ner. 81-6; *RIC* 1² Ner. 332; Carson 1978b, 23, no. 418; Rossini 2006, 46. There are, however, variations of attributes in the Roma series minted by Nero. She sometimes proffers a wreath rather than a victoriola, and, less often, she carries a scepter, cf. *BMCRE* Ner. 396, 399-404; *RIC* 1² Ner. 334-5, 358-9.

¹⁹¹ Studniczka, F. 1909. *Zur Ara Pacis*. Abh. Phil.-hist. Kl. Sächs. Gessellsch. Wiss. 26, pg. 42; Strong, E. 1923-1926. *La Scultura Romana da Augusto a Constantino*. Vol 1. Florence, pg. 24; Simon 1968, 7-8, 29; Torelli 1982, 37-8; La Rocca 1983, 49, 51; Hannestad 1986, 72-3; Kleiner 1992, 98; Rossini 2006, 47; Pollini 2012, 230. *Contra* Simon 1968, 29-30; Cornwell 2017, 170-1.

¹⁹² See no. 213 above.

transformed into a youth during the civil wars in 68-9 CE, probably to differentiate his image from the older, bearded Genius Senatus. It also seems likely that the new iconography of the Genius Populi Romani was borrowed from the iconography of the Genius Augusti depicted in a slightly earlier Neronian series of coins, and not before the Neronian period.¹⁹³ Thus, the head of a youth belongs to Honos, whose youthful image is analogous to his image of the curly-haired youth minted on the Kalenus denarius of 70 BCE (**Fig. 8**). Moreover, as noted above, Augustus' moneyer M. Durmius minted series of denarii to celebrate the emperor's military achievements, the reverses of which features the youthful image of Honos and others that feature Virtus (**Fig. 68**).¹⁹⁴ The images of Honos and Virtus minted on these series of coins celebrating Augustus abroad were already in circulation prior to the construction of the Ara Pacis. Thus, it would seem rather unlikely if the iconography of Honos with which the people of Rome were becoming more and more familiar suddenly changed to represent the Genius Populi Romani. This radical change would have been confusing to the viewer of the Ara Pacis.

The fragment of the head of Honos derives from the upper right-hand corner of the panel, indicating that Honos was portrayed to the right of Roma, seated in the center of the panel. A third figure must have filled the empty space to the left of Roma, the composition of which would complement the tripartite figural composition of the Southeast Panel.¹⁹⁵ The current scholarly consensus is that Virtus filled the space.¹⁹⁶ A few dissent, arguing *pro* Genius Senatus on the grounds that the Genius Populi Romani filled the space to the right.¹⁹⁷ However, aside from the fact that the typological shift of the Genius Populi

¹⁹³ Coins of 68-9 with Genius Populi Romani: *RIC* 1² *Civil Wars* 16-22, 79; *BMCRE* Nero (Spain) 1-2; (Gaul) 21-2; Milhous 1992, 236; Stevenson 1982, 410-1.

¹⁹⁴ *RIC* 1² *Aug.* 315; *BMCR* 2.4563; *BMCRE* 1.56-8; *CNR* 187 (Banti 1973, 285).

¹⁹⁵ La Rocca 1983, 49.

¹⁹⁶ Torelli 1982, 37-8; Hannestad 1983, 73; La Rocca 1983, 49; Kleiner 1992, 98; Milhous 1992, 235-40; Rossini 2006, 46; Pollini 2012, 230; Koeppl (1987, 115) and Rehak (2006, 113) take a neutral position.

¹⁹⁷ Simon 1968, 29-30; Cornwell (2017, 170-1) relies on outdated information in Kuttner (1995, 18-22), and is misguided by both her erroneous identification of the accurate pairing of Honos and Virtus on the Marcellinus denarius of 101/0 as the inaccurate pairing of Roma and the Genius Populi Romani, as well as by her misunderstanding of the iconography of both the Boscoreale Cups and the Cancelleria Reliefs, the former of which depicts Honos and Virtus, and the latter of which depicts Virtus on Relief A, whereas Roma, enthroned, appears on Relief B. See discussion below.

Romani does not occur until the principate of Nero, the image of the Genius Senatus would have been visually redundant since the Roman senators partake in the *supplicatio* procession on the North Frieze. It is almost certain, however, that Virtus accompanied Honos, her ideological companion, in scenes of victory earned during foreign campaigns.

The coupling of Honos and Virtus originated with the Temple of Honos and Virtus, the pairing of whom continued throughout the Republic and early Empire, exemplified by the Marcellinus denarius, Marius' Temple of Honos and Virtus built in the 90s, the Kalenus denarius of 70, the Zoilos Monument of Aphrodisias constructed in the 30s, and the Julio-Claudian Medinaceli Reliefs, in which Honos and Virtus lead the *tensa* of Augustus together in a triumphal procession toward a seated Roma. The Kalenus denarius of 70 demonstrates that there was already a precedent for an ideological connection between Honos and Virtus and [Tellus] Italia and Roma, the former pair depicted on the obverse and the latter on the reverse. And the Medinaceli Reliefs provide visual and ideological comparanda for the grouping of Victoria, Roma, Honos, and Virtus in a triumphal scene in Julio-Claudian relief sculpture. And if we consider the Ara Pacis to be a triumphal monument dedicated to Augustus after completing his foreign military campaigns just as in the case of the Altar of Fortuna Redux placed in front of the Temple of Honos and Virtus, then it is evident that there was already an ideological connection between *pietas*, *honos*, and *virtus*, framed by victory and his arrival in Rome. Therefore, that Virtus was grouped together with Honos, Roma and Victoria (victoriola) on the Northeast Panel of the Ara Pacis – a triumphal monument dedicated to Augustus in honor of his return to Rome after his successful military exploits in the west – is not only rational, but expected. For Moretti's 1948 book on the Ara Pacis, the artist Luperini reconstructed the Northeast Panel to include Honos and Virtus with Roma, the divine triad of which was likely

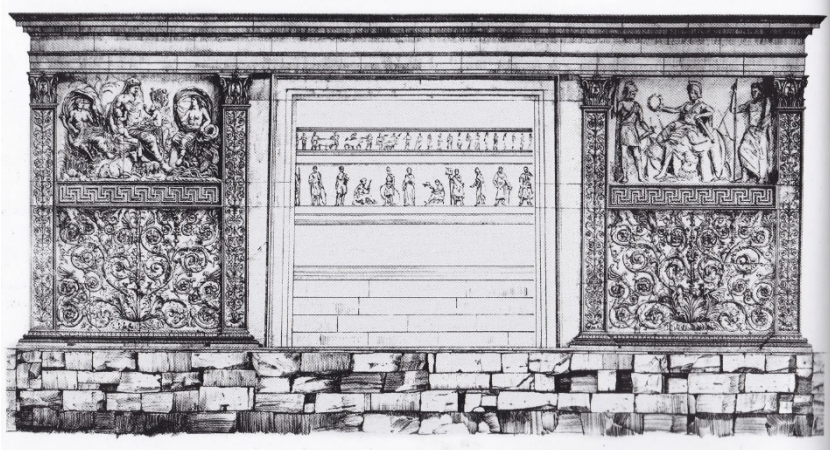


Figure 73: Ara Pacis: Reconstruction of the east wall.

complemented by Victoria in Roma's palm, completing the visual program of the emperor's intrinsic political and military virtues, and, by extension, the virtues of Rome (**Fig. 73**).¹⁹⁸

Because no fragments of Virtus survive, we can only surmise a conjectural reconstruction of her image by appropriating it from earlier comparanda, namely from Republican coins. The Marcellinus denarius of 101/0 (**Fig. 6**) remains the earliest visual representation of Virtus, which must have replicated the original cult statue of Virtus in Marcellus' Temple of Honos and Virtus, and which canonized her iconography during the late Republic and early Empire, attested by the Medinaceli Reliefs. In order to distinguish Virtus from Roma, who is seated and wears a long chiton that exposes her breast, Virtus would have been standing and dressed in a short Amazonian tunic, belted at the waist, that also exposed her right breast. The goddess would have donned a helmet, either an anachronistic bell helmet as she likely wore in the original presentation of her cult statue, or a decorative Corinthian helmet as she wears in later attestations of her image. She would have also carried a spear in her right hand and a *parazonium* in her left. Since the figures illustrated on the Ara Pacis are static in posture, it is plausible that Virtus was also stationary, most certainly portrayed in a *Standmotiv*. And although Roma and Virtus may appear similar to the naked eye, especially in their iconic helmet and bare breast, it is safe to presume that the differences in clothing, attributes, and posture would have been enough for the Roman viewer to discriminate successfully between Roma and Virtus at

¹⁹⁸ Moretti, G. 1948. *Ara Pacis Augustae*. Rome; Rossini 2006, 96; Pollini 2012, 219, fig. V.18b.

this time. But the fact that they do somewhat resemble each other attests to the ideological influence and importance of *virtus* as an inherent martial characteristic both of the emperor, and, by proxy, of Rome.

Those who were traveling south on the Via Flaminia in the Campus Martius toward the city of Rome would have initially engaged with the Northeast Panel of the Ara Pacis, whose political and martial iconography conveyed to the passerby a message of Roman martial authority, under the auspices of Augustus. Pollini asserts that the divine triad of Roma, Honos, and Virtus would have metaphorically symbolized the victories won under Augustus' military *auspicia*, which is generally true.¹⁹⁹ But, something is to be said about the allegorical alliance between the divine triad of Roma, Honos, and Virtus in conjunction with Pax, whose image as Tellus Italiae completes the ideological program that would have benefited those who physically and metaphorically entered the jurisdiction of Rome. As travelers entered Rome from the north along the Via Flaminia, they were greeted by Roma, whose martial image, along with her attribute, the victoriola, and the pile of arms and armor accumulated during war which she sits upon, imparts on the viewer both a sense of Rome's supremacy that extends to the borders of the empire, as well as a sense of security in entering Rome from the uncivilized and unprotected outside world. The presence of Honos and Virtus – the ideological dyad that represented the political and martial aptitude of the *imperator* – instructs the viewer to contemplate the credentials of the commander-in-chief, who kept Roma armed, by maintaining the defense of Rome with his *virtus*, validated by his military accomplishments, and who managed the sovereignty of Roma, represented enthroned, by upholding *iustitia* with his *honos* – his political position as princeps.

As the traveler advances to the pendant panel, the Southeast Panel featuring Pax in the guise of Tellus Italiae, the viewer would have been confronted by a bucolic world of *pax Augusta*, thereby allegorically progressing into a conceptual landscape of peace, prosperity, and privilege, afforded by the

¹⁹⁹ Pollini 2012, 230.



Figure 74: Ara Pacis: Southeast Panel. 13-9 BCE.

emperor's *honos* and *virtus* (Fig. 74).

That is to say the *pax Augusta* is the ideological product of the emperor's political and military superiority that could not have been perpetuated without Augustus' attainment of *honos* and *virtus* through foreign war and subsequent victory. This is

expressed by Augustus himself, who

asserts that, "throughout the empire of the Roman people, peace had been acquired by victories on land and sea."²⁰⁰ The Northeast Panel featuring *Honos* and *Virtus* would have informed the viewer that the emperor possessed the necessary virtues acquired through war and victory needed to preserve the ideal of peace, prosperity, and privilege living in Rome under the auspices of Augustus. *Honos* and *virtus* were the qualities which the people of Rome were looking for in their leader. The emperor's administrative approval depended on the people's recognition and validation of his political and military reputation, constructed on the pillars of warfare and victory that maintained the hegemony of Rome, secured her borders, and perpetuated the *pax Augusta*. Thus, the Ara Pacis was completed in 9 BCE and stood in the Campus Martius not only as a triumphal monument of Augustan peace, but also as a visual testament to Augustus' *virtus*, without which victory in warfare could not have been achieved and Augustan peace would not have prevailed.

²⁰⁰ Aug. RG 13: ...per totum imperium populi Romani terra marique esset parta victoriis pax.

III.VI: The Augustus Cup from Boscoreale



Figure 75: The Augustus Cup from Boscoreale. Julio-Claudian period.

Pax Augusta reverberated across the empire during Augustus' lifetime, stretching from Spain in the west to as far as Armenia in the east, thanks to Augustus, who subordinated Rome's foreign enemies and reined much of the known world into the domain of the Roman empire. Augustus, as pacifier and master of the universe, whose supreme authority was predicated on his political and martial excellence, his *honor* and his *virtus*, respectively, is the subject articulated on the so-called Augustus Cup from the Boscoreale collection (**Fig. 75**). Originally recovered among a hoard of 109 gold and silver objects from a wine-producing *villa rustica* near the town of Boscoreale, the Augustus Cup belongs to a pair of silver *skyphoi*. These drinking vessels are decorated in high relief, depicting historical scenes, one documentary, the Tiberius Cup, and one myth-historical, the Augustus Cup.²⁰¹ The four scenes on both cups have been argued by the original publisher of the cups, Héron de Villefosse, and, accepted by subsequent scholars, to be private reductions of large-scale works, most likely in imitation (as opposed to replication or, rather, transposition) of well-known monumental reliefs in Rome.²⁰²

²⁰¹ Kuttner 1995, 2, 6-9.

²⁰² Héron de Villefosse 1899, 159-60. Kuttner (1995) has painstakingly and extensively studied the Boscoreale Cups for both her dissertation, as well as her monograph. However, her work on the iconography and dating is highly speculative, sometimes imaginative, and, altogether, inconclusive. See (Kleiner 1997), who addresses some of the major flaws in Kuttner's argumentation. I will address some of my concerns on Kuttner's conjectural analysis concerning the Augustus Cup below. I disagree with her on the event depicted on the Tiberius Cup (as it should be the triumph of Tiberius in 12 CE, grounded on iconographical evidence which Kuttner does not address), as well as the overall dating of the cups (not Augustan, but rather Tiberian in date).

The Augustus Cup depicts Augustus, in three-quarter view, as the central focal point, enthroned on a singular *sella curulis* of no known type, which raises his body slightly above the mythological figures, emphasizing his importance among his collection of personal divinities: Mars, Venus, Victoria, Honos, and Virtus, who all aided in his pacification of the world, as Héron de Villefosse rightly points out.²⁰³ Augustus wears a toga and patrician boots. In his left hand, he grips a *rotulus* – a cylindrical scroll signifying *imperium* – and in his outstretched right arm, he wields a globe, symbolizing the universe he pacified. To Augustus' right stands Venus, easily identified by her crown, as well as by her little winged companion standing next to her, Amor, who brandishes a shell and alabastron. The goddess is Genetrix in form – the divine ancestress of the Iulii, to whom Caesar dedicated a temple in his eponymous forum, completed by Augustus – but, Victrix in action.²⁰⁴ Venus, crowned and draped in a heavy chiton, belted at the waist, steps forward and approaches Augustus in order to offer victory, in the form of a *victoriola*, to Augustus. Victoria gracefully alights on the palm of Venus' hand and offers Augustus both a long palm branch and a



Figure 76: Denarius of Caesar featuring Venus Victrix on the reverse. 44 BCE.

laurel wreath, over-emphasizing victory. Weinstock notes that issues of coins minted in 44 that feature Caesar on the obverse with the legend *CAESAR IMPER[ATOR]* and, Venus, wearing a long chiton that bares her left breast and standing next to a shield with scepter in hand and proffering a *victoriola* on the reverse, may represent a cult image of Venus Victrix as reproductions of a well-known statue, likely commissioned by Caesar (**Fig. 76**).²⁰⁵

Weinstock also calls attention to the existence of a Temple of Venus Victrix on the Capitoline, either built by Augustus or, at least, provided the temple with its cult

²⁰³ Héron de Villefosse 1899, 151; despite the fact that he, *op. cit.* 151-2, incorrectly identifies the deities as

, the Genius Populi Romani, Roma, and Agrippa.

²⁰⁴ Simon 1986, 143; Kuttner, 1995, 23.

²⁰⁵ Weinstock 1971, 83-4; *RIC* 480 (18); *BMCRR* 4137-48, 4152-4, 4164-75 (Macer): reverse legend: P SEPVLLIVS MACER.

image of Venus Victrix.²⁰⁶ Thus, it is possible that Venus on the Augustus Cup is a composite imitation influenced by either the Julian or Augustan cult statue of Venus Victrix.



Figure 77: Augustus Cup: detail of the iconography of the side with deities. Julio-Claudian period.

Behind Venus Victrix stand Honos and Virtus (**Fig. 77**). As Kuttner states, the fact that these two figures visually communicate with one another indicates that the deities are to be understood as an interdependent pair. Moreover, Kuttner asserts that the pair, comprising a goddess in Amazon costume and a young, semi-nude god, can be identified in two ways: as Roma and the Genius [Populi Romani], or as Honos and Virtus. And believing that Honos and Virtus did not appear in monumental relief sculpture until the Flavian Period, Kuttner chooses Roma and the Genius Populi Romani, but, unfortunately, grounded on inaccurate assumptions.²⁰⁷ If we consider the Julio-Claudian date, the iconographical Julio-Claudian comparanda, and the martial context of the scene, the pair depicted is demonstrably Honos and Virtus. Therefore, It is worth re-setting the record straight.

In 1899, Héron de Villefosse somewhat arbitrarily labeled the figures represented in the scene as (from left to right): Roma, the Genius Populi Romani, Livia, Augustus, Agrippa, and the subjugated nations.

²⁰⁶ Weinstock 1971, 83-4; *Fasti Amiternini* for October 9th.

²⁰⁷ Kuttner 1995, 18-9.

Roma, he states, is inseparable from Augustus, contingent upon the fact that her image is carved on the altars of the imperial cult dedicated to Augustus and Roma in the provinces.²⁰⁸ And, although temples dedicated to Augustus and Roma were established in the provinces, both east and west, the imperial cult of Augustus and Roma was founded only after Augustus' death and apotheosis. More importantly, Roma did not receive cult status in Italy until the 2nd century CE under Hadrian. And if we consider the iconography on the Augustus Cup, the goddess in question is clearly already paired with someone other than Augustus. The identification of the goddess as Roma by Héron de Villefosse was accepted by subsequent scholars like Hölscher (1980), Zanker (1988), Baratte (1991), and Kuttner (1995), and, most recently, Dowling (2006), Koortbojian (2013), and Cornwell (2017), with Baratte, Dowling, and Cornwell explicitly following Kuttner's problematic analysis of "Roma" and the "Genius Populi Romani" on the Augustus Cup.²⁰⁹ In 1926, Rostovtzeff identified the divine pair as Honos and Virtus and, again, in 1960, Kähler recognized that the divine pair could only be Honos and Virtus, but their affirmation of these figures' identities seems to have gone unnoticed or ignored.²¹⁰ In 1963, Vermeule identified the god as the Genius Populi Romani, and the goddess as Virtus, but did not rule out the possibility of Roma.²¹¹ Koepfel (1982), Pfanner (1983), Simon (1986), D. Kleiner (1992), F. Kleiner (1997, 2007), and Pollini (2012), however, have since correctly identified the pair as Honos and Virtus, but have made no attempts to substantiate their claims.²¹² In 1992, Milhous attempted to set the record straight in response to Kuttner, rejecting her identification of the pair as Roma and the Genius Populi Romani, and asserting that the pair must be Honos and Virtus based on the fact that Roma and the Genius Populi Romani were never paired

²⁰⁸ Héron de Villefosse 1899, 151-2. A portrait of Livia in the guise of Venus cannot be ruled out, and is accepted by other scholars (Vermeule 1963, 35; Brilliant 1963, 75); however, Kuttner (1995, 31-2) rightly asserts that the identification of the portrait cannot be ascertained because this part of the cup as been, unfortunately, destroyed.

²⁰⁹ Hölscher 1980 282; Zanker 1988, 230; Baratte 1991, 28; Kuttner 1995, 18-22; Dowling 2006, 146; Koortbojian 2013, 142-3; Cornwell (2017, 170-1) also misunderstands the iconography of the Cancellaria Reliefs, labeling, once again, Virtus as Roma, *op cit.* 171, no. 40.

²¹⁰ Rostovtzeff 1926, 76 (accepted by Townsend 1938, 518, no. 5); Kähler 1960, 226.

²¹¹ Vermeule 1963, 35.

²¹² Koepfel 1982, 521; Pfanner 1983, 68-9; Simon 1986, 143; Kleiner 1992, 153; Kleiner 1997, 378; Pollini 2012, 87; cf. also 1978, 286.

together in Roman art, which is true; however, Milhous fails to objectively contextualize the divine couple within the composition of the scene.²¹³ Therefore, I would like to fully investigate some of the iconographical conceptions and misconceptions of these deities in question. I would also like to contextualize their identifications in compliance with the visual rhetoric of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, emphasizing the significance of propagating the images of Augustus' political and martial qualities, namely his *honos* and his *virtus*, that elevated him to the position of ruler of the Roman state.



Figure 78: Augustus Cup: detail of Honos and Virtus. Julio-Claudian period.

The divine pair accompany Venus Victrix as they proceed toward Augustus, completing the left side of the scene (**Fig. 78**). First, it should be noted that this divine assemblage is not illogical, since Venus Victrix, Honos, and Virtus shared a shrine in the Theater of Pompey, and also shared a festival day of annual sacrifices on the 12th of August, according to the *Fasti Amiternini*.²¹⁴ Virtus is positioned in her canonical *Standmotiv*, predicated on her original cult statue. Virtus dons a crested helmet with a single side feather on both sides of the crest, similar to her crested bell helmet with side feather illustrated on the

Aquillius denarius struck in 71, which must have been the archetypal helmet type worn by the original cult statue, before the helmet type transitioned to the Attic helmet type in the 1st century BCE.²¹⁵ The hair

²¹³ Milhous (1992, 242-3) responded to Kuttner's dissertation: Kuttner, A.L. 1987. *The Boscoreale Cups of Augustus. Studies in Augustan Art and Politics*. A dissertation of the University of California, Berkeley; Pfanner 1983, 68-9.

²¹⁴ *Fasti Amiternini* for the 12th of August, along with Felicitas.

²¹⁵ Kuttner (1995, 14) conjectures that the helmet is triple-crested; however, the side "crests" are doubtless feathers. They are tall, thin, and pointy, and resemble nothing of a crest.

underneath her crested helmet is short and wavy.²¹⁶ Virtus wears her conventional short Amazonian tunic, belted twice at the waist, which divests her right breast. She also wears a mantle that is bunched on her left shoulder and envelops her left forearm. Her balteus wraps around her right shoulder and she carries a *parazonium* at her side, the hilt of which can be seen in low relief behind her left arm. While clutching the hilt of her sword, she catches the drapery of her tunic. In her right hand, she carries a missing object, certainly her spear, which was not recovered at the time of discovery, and likely disappeared in antiquity. The tall boots which Virtus wears are cuffed at the ankle, much like her lion-skin boots she wears in subsequent depictions of Virtus in relief sculpture. Finally, Virtus rests her left foot on a crest-less helmet with cheek-pieces. This motif is not uncharacteristic of Virtus, and, in fact, as we will see, will become standardized in subsequent issues of coins depicting Virtus.

As for Virtus' divine counterpart and ideological partner in the visual culture of the late Republic and the Julio-Claudian period, Honos is depicted frontally, save for his head, which is turned away from the focal point of the scene in order to communicate with Virtus, similar to the way in which Honos and Virtus face each other on the bronze sestertius minted by Galba in 68. Honos stands barefoot and semi-nude, wearing only a mantle that bunches on his left shoulder, wraps around his waist, and terminates over his left wrist. His curly hair is medium in length, enveloping his left ear. Kuttner asserts that his hair is knotted in the back in a chignon, but I see no indication of this.²¹⁷ He wears a band around his head, which could represent a fillet, and is quite similar to the fillet Honos wears on the Northeast Frieze of the Ara Pacis. In his left hand, he carries a curved cornucopia, from which sprouts an abundance of vegetation. In his right hand, he brandishes a *patera umbilicata*, a libation dish with a central projection.

²¹⁶ Milhous (1992, 242) states that the short coiffure of Virtus differentiates her from Roma; however, this theory holds no traction because there are subsequent examples of Roma with short hair, e.g. the Column of Jupiter from Mainz.

²¹⁷ Kuttner 1995, 14.

According to Kuttner, the attributes of neither figure fit an Honos and Virtus identification.²¹⁸ This assertion, however, is disingenuous. Kuttner states that, “Honos always wears a laurel crown, as he embodies noble achievement; both Honos and the Genius can carry a curved cornucopia, but only the Genius carries, and always carries, a patera.”²¹⁹ Admittedly, the patera is an uncharacteristic attribute of Honos, who typically carries a spear, scepter, or palm; and there are no extant comparanda for the *patera*. However, this does not automatically preclude the identification of the god as Honos, especially since the iconography of a youthful figure with patera does not coincide with any pre-68/9 CE typological features of the Genius Populi Romani. The moneyer Gnaeus Cornelius Lentulus Marcellinus struck a series of denarii



Figure 79: Denarius featuring the Genius Populi Romani on the obverse. 76/5 BCE.

in 76/5 BCE that features the Genius Populi Romani on the obverse with the legend *GPR*, represented as a mature and bearded man with fillet and scepter (**Fig. 79**).²²⁰ There are no other securely identifiable representations of the Genius Populi Romani until the Civil Wars in 68/9, when the Genius Populi Romani was re-imagined as a bare-chested youth with cornucopia and patera, adopted only as early as the late-Neronian period in imitation of the Genius Augusti type, again



Figure 80: As of Nero featuring the Genius Augusti on the reverse. 62-68 CE.

likely in order to differentiate him from the older, bearded Genius Senatus. Sometime between 62 and 68, Nero had minted several series of aes that illustrate, for the first time, the Genius Augusti, identified by the legend *GENIO AVGVSTI* (**Fig. 80**).²²¹ The Genius Augusti is depicted as a semi-nude youth, wearing only a mantle draped around his waist and

²¹⁸ Kuttner 1995, 19.

²¹⁹ Kuttner 1995, 19.

²²⁰ The son of the moneyer Marcellinus, Gnaeus Cornelius Lentulus Marcellinus was quaestor in 74, praetor in 60, and consul in 56: *RRC* 393 (Crawford 1974, 411); Sumner 1973, 133-4. This denarius testifies to the fact that the Genius Populi Romani is not represented on the Marcellinus denarius of 101/0, supporting the fact that Honos and Virtus appear on the reverse, not Roma and the Genius Populi Romani.

²²¹ *RIC* 1² *Ner.* 83-7, 124-5, 213-20, 382,3, 419-2, 462-7, 532-6.

bunched on his left shoulder and boots or shoes. He wears a fillet on his head, carries a cornucopia in the crook of his left hand and, with his right, he pours a libation from a patera onto an altar below. The iconography of the Genius Augusti is so analogous to the iconography of the divine youth on the Augustus Cup, except for the addition of the burning altar and shoes, that one could easily presume, without



Figure 81: Denarius featuring the Genius Populi Romani on the reverse. 68/9 CE.



Figure 82: Denarius featuring the Genius Populi Romani on the obverse. 68/9 CE.



Figure 83: Denarius featuring the Genius Populi Romani on the obverse. 68/9 CE.

context, that the god on the Augustus Cup is the Genius Augusti. During the Civil Wars in 68/9, the typology of the Genius Augusti from the Neronian coin was appropriated for a new typology of the Genius Populi Romani, identified by the legend *GENIO P R* (**Fig. 81**).²²² This series of coins was struck

in addition to the preexisting typology of the Genius as an older, bearded man wearing diadem or fillet on contemporary issues (**Fig. 82**).²²³ A third series was produced featuring a youthful Genius Populi Romani on the obverse, identified by the legend *GENIO P R*, whose attributes include a laurel wreath on his head and a cornucopia placed in the space behind his head (**Fig. 83**).²²⁴ It seems that, during the Civil Wars, there were new innovations in the

typology of the Genius Populi Romani, but not before 68/9 CE. Therefore, on the grounds that a youthful semi-nude type for the Genius Populi Romani did not exist before the Civil Wars, the image of the divine youth depicted on the Augustus Cup should, therefore, derive from the available contemporary iconography of the late-Republican and Julio-Claudian periods. But, what of the patera which Honos holds in his right hand? An iconographical investigation of the Amazon goddess may have the answer.

²²² *RIC 1² Civil Wars 1; BMCRE Civil Wars 49* (Mattingly 1923, 288, note *, Pl. 49.12).

²²³ *RIC 1² Civil Wars 42-8; BMCRE Civil Wars 21-2*.

²²⁴ *RIC 1² Civil Wars 16-22, 42-7; BMCRE Civil Wars 2*, pls. 49.14-15.

There is nothing uncharacteristic about the iconography of Virtus on the Augustus Cup. The goddess' image is analogous to the typology of Virtus from the Marcellinus denarius of 101/0 BCE to the Altar from Cologne from the 3rd century CE. Since Kuttner states at the beginning of her iconographical examination of the Amazon goddess, "one should identify a figure by looking at *comparanda* from the period in question and the periods preceding it, in this case at Republican and Augustan images, turning to *comparanda* of a much later date only as a last resort," I will also use the same methodological parameters for my investigation of the goddess in question, albeit with a much greater sense of scrutiny.²²⁵ Kuttner sets out in identifying the Republican images of Honos and Virtus, asserting that there is only one example, the Kalenus denarius of 70, which depicts the jugate heads of Honos and Virtus in profile on the reverse and Roma and Italia on the obverse (**Fig. 8**). The only identifiable attribute of Virtus is a stylized helmet with crest, aside from her label. Roma, on the other hand, wears a diadem, tied at the back, and a long chiton that drapes just below the knees. She carries *fascēs* faced with an axe in the crook of her left arm. Her right foot is positioned on a globe, a symbol of her universal power.

Moreover, Honos and Virtus are, indeed, paired together on another series of coins struck from the Republic – the denarius of 101/0 minted by Publius Cornelius Lentulus Marcellinus (**Fig. 6**). Virtus, positioned in her canonical *Standmotiv*, wears a crested helmet with side feathers and a short Amazonian tunic. She carries a reverse spear in her right hand, and, in her left, she clutches the hilt of her sword, likely a *parazonium*, against her waist. Honos, a semi-clad youth, carries a cornucopia in his left hand and crowns Virtus with a wreath with his right, thereby glorifying Virtus and acknowledging that *honos*, or political honor, was predicated on the acquisition of *virtus*, or martial excellence. Kuttner mentions the coin, but incorrectly dates it to 89 BCE, insists that the divine pair depicted on the issue is Roma and the Genius Populi Romani without evidence, and names the moneyer "Publius Cornelius Lentulus,"

²²⁵ Kuttner 1995, 19.

suspiciously omitting the Marcellan name, “Marcellinus,” even though her source, Grueber, explicitly states that Marcellinus was the son of Marcellus.²²⁶ Thus, the coin cannot be used as a comparandum for Roma and the Genius Populi Romani, which Kuttner attempts to use to prove her identification of “Roma” and the “Genius Populi Romani” depicted on the Augustus Cup. It, in fact, does the opposite, in that it supports the identification of the divine pair as Honos and Virtus. And, moreover, we have to keep in mind that, just as both Pfanner and Milhous concluded in 1983 and 1992, respectively, Roma and the Genius Populi Romani are never paired together in Roman art of any period.²²⁷



Figure 84: Denarius featuring Roma and Venus on the reverse. 75 BCE.

Roma is, however, paired with Venus on the reverse of a denarius minted in 75 BCE by C. Ignatius Maxsumus, which Kuttner uses to maintain her identification of “Roma” on the Augustus Cup (**Fig. 84**).²²⁸ Venus, diademed, wears a long chiton, draped to her shoes, and wields a staff in her right hand. A small, winged Cupid flies between Venus and Roma. Roma wears a non-descript helmet, and a long chiton that drapes almost to the floor, revealing only a part of her right boot. In her right hand she

carries a staff and, in her left, a sword, identified by the hilt. Roma’s left leg is raised on an object, said to be a “wolf’s head” (although, to me, it looks like a *rostrum*). In any case, Kuttner points out that Roma’s “tunic” (clearly not a tunic), is caught up above her left knee, revealing her thigh. This depiction of Roma somewhat resembles the stance of Virtus on the Augustus Cup; however, to use an example of Roma, wearing a long chiton, one similar to the chiton of Venus, with a foot placed on an animal’s head, and paired with Venus as evidence for the identification of the goddess as “Roma” on the Augustus Cup is grasping for straws. Moreover, Kuttner claims that this denarius is the earliest attestation of Roma as a

²²⁶ Kuttner 1995, 19; Grueber (*BMCRR* 1704-24) 1910, 233-5. Grueber misdates the coin to 89, hence Kuttner.

²²⁷ Pfanner 1983, 68-9; Milhous 1992, 242.

²²⁸ *RRC* 391; *BMCRR* 3285.

standing Amazon.²²⁹ I see nothing Amazonian about her. Lastly, Kuttner insists that, “there are, all through the late Republic, a very large number of Roma representations on gems (private images) and coins (official images), showing Roma with the Amazon costume or the weapon pile or both, as on the cup.”²³⁰ However, Kuttner fails to demonstrate a single example, and I have yet to find one pre-Civil-Wars example of Roma as a standing Amazon, emulating the image of Virtus. And there is only one example of a seated Roma wearing an Amazonian costume, minted by C. Vibius Pansa Caetronianus in 48 BCE, which I will address below. However, I will establish here that Roma is never depicted as a standing Amazon, emulating the image of Virtus, until the 60s CE, during a time of great iconographical experimentation when the moneyers reenvisioned Roma’s principal public image from an enthroned matron with Amazonian-like features to a Roma with purely Amazonian and martial attributes. This transformation occurs after Roma evolves into *Roma Victrix* and *Roma Renascens* on coins minted during the Civil Wars, when Roma was “reborn” to defend herself and her people in a time of civil strife. Thus, in the 60s, official images of Roma began to appropriate the Amazon-warrior typology of Virtus traditional to the Republican and Julio-Claudian periods during a time of internal turmoil, especially during the Civil Wars, under aggressively competing military commanders all vying for martial power, when the *virtus* of Rome was needed the most.

But, what did Roma look like during the Julio-Claudian era? And does her Julio-Claudian typology promote an identification of Roma on the Augustus Cup, as it should, according to Kuttner? Kuttner’s thesis on the iconography of the Augustus Cup fails to discuss contemporary images of Roma, which should, in theory, support her argument for a Roma identification. After all, if this composition on the Augustus Cup derived, even in imitation, from a public Julio-Claudian monument in Rome, a theory on

²²⁹ Kuttner 1995, 19, 219, no. 10.

²³⁰ Kuttner 1995, 19.

which Kuttner greatly expounds, then the image of Roma, the patron goddess of the city, should be easily recognizable to the viewer of the Augustus Cup, or rather of the Roman monument it imitated.

The earliest manifestation of Roma comes from a 3rd-century BCE Greek didrachm from the city-state of Locri Epizephyrri in Magna Graecia, on which the goddess is enthroned on a pile of armor (**Fig. 24**). She wields a longsword under her right arm, and wears a heavy chiton, which covers her torso and envelops her legs down to her feet. Although this image of Roma was conceived by the Greeks living in southern Italy, the seated-Roma type became the most iconic Roma type during the late Republic and early Empire. This type was first adopted by the moneyer N. Fabius Pictor, who struck a series of denarii in 126 BCE featuring a Roma seated in a chair, against which a shield leans. Roma is wearing a helmet and a long chiton, the drapery of which envelops her legs to her boots. In 115/4, an anonymous moneyer struck a coin depicting the earliest Roman representation of Roma seated on a pile of armor. Roma carries a staff, wears a helmet, and is draped in a long chiton down to her boots (**Fig. 44**). A series of denarii struck in the late 90s BCE by A. Postumius Albinus, L. Caecilius Metellus, and C. Publicius Malleolus demonstrate the earliest attestation of Roma baring her breast (**Fig. 85**).²³¹ On the reverse, an un-helmeted Roma, seated on a pile of shields, wears a long chiton, belted at the waist. It drapes below her knees and exposes part of her ankles and boots, as well as her left breast. The bare-breasted motif and the style of the short



Figure 85: Denarius featuring a seated Roma and Victoria. Ca. 90s BCE.

chiton may have been appropriated from earlier representations of Virtus in an Amazonian tunic. However, her long chiton is hardly analogous to the short Amazonian tunic of Virtus worn above the knee, and may have been created to differentiate the iconography of the two goddesses. A similar Roma wearing a long chiton that bares her breast can be found on the Kalenus denarius of 70 (**Fig. 8**). Roma wears a

²³¹ *RRC* 335 (Crawford 1974, 333); *BMCRR* i.724, 726, 730, 732. This motif was reprised on coins struck in 59 by Marcus Nonius Sufenas, cf. *RRC* 421; *BMCRR* i.3820-3.

diadem, tied at the back, and carries *fascēs* in her left hand. And she wears a long chiton that exposes her right breast, but is longer than an Amazonian tunic. It is permissible to assume that the moneyer was influenced by the iconography of Virtus, since a portrait of Virtus is depicted on the reverse of the coin. The possibilities of influence include the Amazonian tunic she wears on the Marcellinus denarius (**Fig. 6**), and, perhaps, the Amazonian tunic she must have worn on the likeness of her cult statue of the Temple of Honos and Virtus consecrated by Marius in the 90s. In any case, Roma is one step closer to appropriating the Amazonian typology of Virtus; however, the short chiton, the diadem, and the *fascēs* are still dynastic attributes of a sovereign nation, not the attributes of an Amazon warrior ready for war on the battlefield. Moreover, caution should be taken not to label every bare-breasted Roma as an Amazon, since the bare breast motif is demonstrated by other goddesses, whose iconography can connote a variety of disparate concepts, fertility, abundance, vulnerability, and motherhood to name a few, or else we run the risk of labeling every goddess who bares her breast, for example Venus, Victoria, Aurora, Securitas, and Aeternitas, as an Amazon.²³²



Figure 86: Denarius featuring a seated Roma on a pile of armor on the reverse. 48 BCE.

In 48 BCE, C. Vibius Pansa Caetronianus minted an issue of denarii featuring the only Republican example of Roma in Amazonian costume (**Fig. 86**).²³³ On the reverse, Roma, seated on a pile of armor, carries a regal scepter in her right hand, and a grooved sword with pommel.²³⁴ She wears a crested helmet, and an Amazonian tunic that exposes her right breast. Her left foot is positioned on a globe. A flying Victoria crowns her to the right. This

²³² Caesar's Venus of 44: *RRC* 480; *BMCR* i.4152-4, 4164-75. Victoria by L. Hostilius Seserna ca. 48: *RRC* 448; *BMCR* i.3989-93; Aurora (possibly Victoria) by L. Plancus, 47: *RRC* 453; *BMCR* i.4004-10. Securitas: *RIC* 1² Nero 519; *BMCR* Nero 212-3. Aeternitas: relief of the Apotheosis of Sabina, Hadrianic.

²³³ *RRC* 449.4 (Crawford 1974, 465); *BMCR* i.3983-5; reverse die possibly imitated by T. Carisius in 46, although there is only one poorly preserved example: *RRC* 464; *BMCR* 4075.

²³⁴ Grueber (1910, 511) posits that the sword is a short sword (*parazonium*), but the hilt of the sword has a double pommel which a *parazonium* does not.

is the closest in iconography that Roma comes to appropriating the Virtus-type, save for her personal attributes of her sovereignty – her regal scepter and her globe of the universe – as well as her conventional seated position. Nevertheless, I maintain that there are no Republican images of a standing Roma wearing a short Amazonian tunic which could be used as comparanda for the Amazon goddess positioned in a *Standmotiv* on the Augustus Cup.

As for comparanda for Republican and Julio-Claudian representations of Roma outside of numismatics, the Zoilos Monument from Aphrodisias is decorated with a relief of Roma just around the corner from Andreia (Zoilos' equivalent for Virtus) and Timē (Honos) (**Fig. 23**). As a Greek who lived most of his life in the Roman world, Zoilos seems to have familiarized himself with Roman political and military symbolism, resolving to depict himself on his public monument in the presence of Andreia and Timē, as well as of Roma. Roma, helmeted, and seated on a throne, carries a scepter, staff, or spear in her right hand, and rests her left on a large shield placed next to her. She wears a long, unbelted chiton that reveals her right breast and drapes over her lap, legs, and down to her feet. She does not wear a short Amazonian tunic, which is always belted. It remains unknown what the model was for Zoilos' Roma, however, we can deduce that the model for the enthroned Roma did not change from the 30s to the construction of the Ara Pacis.

Shortly after Augustus celebrated his triple triumph in 29 BCE, the Actian Monument at Nikopolis commissioned by Augustus was completed. Many of the mythological figures that once decorated part of the sculpted friezes of the monument have not been securely identified due to their fragmentary condition. However, as discussed above, Actian Fragment C depicts a pair of decorative boots placed in a seated position above a singular strewn helmet and an *aphlaston* belonging to a stern of a ship (**Fig. 42**). The fragment doubtless represents a Roma seated on a pile of armor. The fragment also identifies the monument as the earliest representation of Roma in official state relief sculpture, and the Roma with which Augustus was undoubtedly familiar.



Figure 87: Ara Pacis: Detail of the Northeast Panel. 13-9 BCE.

Roma sculpted on the northeast frieze of the Ara Pacis should clearly serve as the archetypal *exemplum* of the Roma type found in the city of Rome during the Julio-Claudian era. Unfortunately, we have only two extant fragments that comprise the image of Roma (**Fig. 87**). However, the fragments provide enough information about the canon of Roma's image, namely

that Roma was seated on a pile of armor, and that the heavy chiton Roma wore draped below the knee, evidenced by the fragment depicting part of a shield that demonstrates residual drapery folds below the bend of the knee. This is also corroborated by the Roma relief from Carthage, which depicts a seated Roma, who wears a long and heavy chiton, unbelted at the waist, that drapes to her feet. Therefore, this was the Roma with which Augustus was most familiar, the archetypal Roma of the Julio-Claudian era. And, moreover, Roma from the Ara Pacis would have been seen by all passersby who traveled the Via Flaminia, inevitably becoming the most familiar image of Roma as the enthroned, matron-type, who is seated on a pile of armor and wears a long, unbelted chiton. Thus, the Ara Pacis Roma could not have served as model for the standing Amazon goddess dressed in a short Amazonian tunic depicted on the Augustus Cup. But her companion Virtus likely could have. Moreover, that the subsequent depictions of Roma in Julio-Claudian representations radically changed from an enthroned and heavily draped matron-type to a standing Amazon warrior is unrealistic, and would have been confusing to the viewer, just as an extreme shift from the Honos-type for hypothetical representations of the Genius Populi Romani would be at this time. If the Augustus-themed composition of the Augustus Cup does come from a public Julio-Claudian monument in Rome, as Kuttner argues, then it is safe to presume that the images of the divinities should

derive from preexisting models, and so far, the ideal contemporary model for Roma illustrated on the Ara Pacis does not correlate with the Amazon goddess on the Augustus Cup.

Since the Boscoreale Cups are private in nature, I believe it would be worth evaluating contemporary images of Roma in the private sphere. The relatively contemporary Gemma Augustea of the Julio-Claudian period would, in theory, provide structural support to Kuttner's assertions about the Augustus Cup, since it depicts the goddess Roma and Augustus within



Figure 88: The Gemma Augustea. Julio-Claudian period.

the same composition (**Fig. 88**).²³⁵ On the upper register, an enthroned Roma sits next to the Divus Augustus, both of whom position their legs on a pile of armor, indicative of their equality in sovereignty over the Roman world. One could even say that she is coupled with her divine counterpart, Divus Augustus, similar to the way in which Honos and Virtus are divinely paired in Roman art. Roma, helmeted and carrying a spear or staff in her right hand and a sword at her waist hung from a balteus slung around her right shoulder, wears a long, billowy chiton that drapes to the ground, enveloping her legs and foot. Note that her voluminous chiton does not divest her right breast. Therefore, even the relatively contemporary Gemma Augustea reveals that Roma is depicted as an enthroned matron in chiton, whose image does not correspond to the Amazon goddess represented on the Augustus Cup.

²³⁵ On the iconography and interpretation of the Gemma Augustea which I found especially helpful, cf. Pollini, J. 1993. *The Gemma Augustea: Ideology, Rhetorical Imagery, and the Construction of a 'Dynastic Narrative'* in P.J. Holliday (ed.). *Narrative and Event in Ancient Art*. Cambridge, pp. 258-298; Jeppesen K.K. 1994. *The Identity of the Missing Togatus and Other Clues to the Interpretation of the Gemma Augustea*. *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 13.3, pp. 335-355.



Figure 89: A Julio-Claudian cameo. Julio-Claudian period. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

Moreover, a Julio-Claudian cameo located in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna demonstrates a similar composition to the Gemma Augustea (**Fig. 89**).²³⁶ Augustus (or Caligula), is seated on a throne as Divus, along with his divine counterpart Roma. Roma, with a crested helmet and holding a shield on her lap, wears a heavy chiton, the drapery of which envelops her entire body from shoulders down to her feet. Needless to say, this Julio-Claudian example of Roma in the private sphere is also not suitable as a model for the incorrectly

identified “Roma” on the Augustus Cup.

The most convincing evidence, I believe, that decisively refutes the theory that the Amazon goddess on the Augustus Cup represents Roma comes from the Claudian Medinaceli Reliefs, the iconography of which celebrates the life and accomplishments of Augustus from his greatest military victory at Actium to his divinization after his death. The Medinaceli Reliefs (**Figs. 45-59**) are the only extant objects from the Julio-Claudian period that depict Augustus, accompanied by his personal entourage of ideological divinities, namely Virtus (twice), Victoria, Mars, Roma, and Honos, all of whom, except for Roma, are also assembled together on the Augustus Cup. As a public monument representing the political, military, and divine achievements of Augustus, as well his his personal virtues, we should expect that the representations of the figures in the Medinaceli group should be recognizable to the public during the Julio-Claudian period. Virtus, dressed in her archetypal Amazonian tunic that reveals her breast, assumes her new responsibility during the Julio-Claudian era in relation to the emperor, namely as Augustus’ personal guide to glory during triumph, gained from his victories in warfare. On the Tensa Relief, Virtus,

²³⁶ Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. IX a 59, h. 11 cm., w. 10 cm. Cf. also Fischer, J.C. 2016. *A Woman’s Weapon: Private Propaganda in the Large Imperial Cameos of the Early Roman Empire*, in J.C. Fischer (ed.). *More than Mere Playthings: The Minor Arts of Italy*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 51-56.

originally helmeted, and dressed in her iconic Amazonian tunic, is paired with her divine partner Honos, as one would expect, who is depicted as a semi-nude youth, carries a lance in his right hand and a cornucopia in his left. Mars is dressed in military garb, as one would expect, wearing a crested helmet, carrying a shield, and dressed in a cuirass and *paludamentum*. Victoria is winged and carries an excessively large wreath. And Roma, wearing a crested helmet and carrying a scepter or spear in her right hand, is enthroned on a pile of arms. The details of her dress are unidentifiable save for the fact that it exposes her right breast, as is expected. As public images of the gods that have been created during the Julio-Claudian period for an Augustan monument, we should expect that they are represented in their most identifiable forms. Thus, the enthroned Roma as matron depicted in the Medinaceli group could not have served as model for the standing Amazon goddess on the Augustus Cup.

Just as the Zoilos Monument, the Actian Monument, the Ara Pacis, the Gemma Augustea, the Vienna Cameo, and the Medinaceli Reliefs demonstrate, two of which were doubtless viewed by Augustus, the Julio-Claudian Roma-type is transparent. The Julio-Claudian Roma is always depicted as a seated matron, who wears a long chiton that may or may not expose her right breast. Kuttner's "Roma" on the Augustus Cup would be the only exception to the entire corpus of the Julio-Claudian Roma, pre-60s. Thus, the Amazon goddess depicted on the Augustus Cup is not Roma. If Roma were rendered on the Augustus Cup, she would have been depicted as the Julio-Claudian enthroned matron-goddess, paired with no one other than the Divine Augustus, as is the case with the Gemma Augustea and with the Vienna Cameo. But is the divine pair illustrated on the Augustus Cup really representative of Honos and Virtus, even though Honos holds a patera and Virtus rests her foot on a helmet?

Apropos of the Amazon goddess, Kuttner insists that, "in the entire Roman artistic corpus, only Roma appears with the weapon pile she has here, sitting or standing on or by it."²³⁷ This is, however,

²³⁷ Kuttner 1995, 15.

profoundly untrue. During the 60s, under the principate of Nero, images of both Virtus and Roma were reorganized. New dies were manufactured by Nero's moneyers for many deities previously represented in Roman Republican and Juli-Claudian coinage, depicted in various new poses and with new attributes. The 60s were a great time of iconographical experimentation in Rome; and Virtus and Roma were not exempt from transition and conflation. Numismatic representations of 60s-Roma were blurred with the visual typology of Virtus from the pre-Neronian era, adopting the *Standmotiv* for the first time, and wearing the iconic Amazonian tunic. And representations of 60s-Virtus demonstrate that the goddess began placing her foot on armor in much the same way as Roma placed her foot on a globe on Republican coins, or on a shield as on the Gemma Augustea. And Neronian representations of Virtus attest that the goddess could also carry a victoriola in the palm of her hand in much the same way as Roma does. Moreover, the Genius Augusti, personified for the first time in the 60s, adopted the iconography of Honos as a semi-naked youth carrying a cornucopia, with the addition of a patera and burning altar – the iconography of which was later adopted by the Genius Populi Romani during the Civil Wars in 68/9.

On several issues of aurei and denarii minted by Nero in the 60s, Virtus with short hair, positioned in a *Standmotiv*, and wearing a crested helmet and a short, belted tunic that does not expose her right breast, wields a reverse spear in her left hand and a *parazonium* in her right (**Fig. 90**).²³⁸ She wears high boots and rests her foot on a helmet with cheek-pieces, among with a pile of shields, incidentally in much the same way as the Amazon goddess on the Augustus Cup. In fact, the Neronian Virtus is the mirror image of the Augustus-Cup Virtus.



Figure 90: Aureus of Nero featuring Virtus on the reverse. Ca. 60s CE.

²³⁸ RIC 1² Nero 25-6, 31-2, 36-7, 40-1; BMCRE Nero 27-8, 40-2, 45-8.



Figure 91: Aureus of Nero featuring Roma on the reverse. Ca. 60s CE.

In contrast to the new Virtus-type of the 60s, contemporary issues of a new Roma-type were also struck (**Fig. 91**).²³⁹ On the obverse of aurei minted under Nero, Roma stands for the first time since the Kalenus denarius of 70 BCE. She wears a helmet with stylized crest and a short tunic, belted at the waist. She also wears a mantle, which drapes down her back to her boots. She rests her left foot on a pile of armor and weapons; however, she does not carry any weapons herself. The only attribute she bears is a shield upon which she writes, thereby differentiating her from Virtus, who carries a spear and a *parazonium*. Thus, although Roma is depicted standing and wearing a short tunic much like Virtus, this Roma-type does not occur until the 60s, confirming that it could not have served as model for a Julio-Claudian monument during the Augustan or Tiberian principate. Needless to say, the attribute of the new standing Roma, namely her inscribed shield and nothing else, does not correlate with any pre-Neronian representations of Roma. Neither of the Neronian goddesses has an identifiable legend; however, the Neronian Virtus maintains iconographical consistency on subsequent imperial depictions of the goddess that corroborate her identity, whereas the Neronian Roma with shield disappears altogether from the iconographical record; and, in fact, the identification of this goddess as Roma cannot be entirely confirmed with certainty.

During Galba's reign in 68/9, the emperor minted his famous sesterius featuring the fully-figured divine pair of Honos and Virtus that illustrates the same Virtus-type from the Neronian aureus with the exception that Virtus places her right foot on a muscular cuirass rather than a helmet (**Fig. 10**).²⁴⁰ However,

²³⁹ RIC 1² Nero 27-8, 33-4, 38-9, 42-3; BMCRE Nero 29-30, 36-7, 43-44, 49-51.

²⁴⁰ RIC 1² Galba 474-8; BMCRE Galba 255-7 (see also discussion above).



Figure 92: Denarius of Vespasian featuring Honos and Virtus. Ca.71 CE.

when Vetellius in 69 and Vespasian in 71 reprise this die series, the muscular cuirass on which Virtus rests her right foot is replaced by a helmet with cheek-pieces, much like the one depicted on the Augustus Cup (**Fig. 92**).²⁴¹ Although there are no manifestations of Virtus from the Republican or pre-Neronian period that demonstrate the image of the Amazon goddess with her foot positioned on helmet or other accoutrement, there are demonstrably Neronian, Galban, Vitellian, and Vespasianic attestations of Virtus that confirm this iconographical feature of Virtus. Thus, there is nothing about the Amazon goddess on the Augustus Cup that is not Virtus from helmet on head to foot on helmet. The goddess ought to be securely identified as Virtus on the Augustus Cup.

As for the semi-nude youth depicted on the Augustus Cup, Kuttner's argument for the identification of the Genius Populi Romani hinges on the patera he holds out in his right hand over nothing in particular. However, there are three possible scenarios. First, the artist of the Boscoreale Cups only ascribed a patera to Honos without meaningful purpose. Second, the artist of the Boscoreale Cups replicated a Julio-Claudian monument that ascribed a patera to Honos, albeit the only official, state-commissioned *exemplum* of Honos with patera in Roman history.²⁴² The third scenario requires a bit of detective work. The fact that both the image of Virtus with foot resting on helmet and the image of a semi-draped youth holding a patera do not enter the corpus of Roman iconography until the 60s CE may give us a clue as to why Honos carries a patera on the Augustus Cup. As I have discussed above, the Genius Augusti does not enter the visual record until the 60s, when the pre-existing model of Honos as a semi-

²⁴¹ Vitellius: *RIC 1*² *Vitellius* 113; *BMCRE Vitellius* 48 (Mattingly 1923, 375); Vespasian: *RIC 2*² *Vespasian* 232.

²⁴² Cf. Kleiner (1997), who rejects Kuttner's hypothesis that the cups represent an exact, photographic replication of a sculptured monument in Rome without the probability of adaptation and modification needed to conform to the small-scale template of the Boscoreale Cups.

naked youth was appropriated for the new image of the Neronian Genius Augusti and the Civil-Wars Genius Populi Romani, with the addition of the patera, the burning altar, and boots or shoes, as opposed to the barefoot god depicted on the Augustus Cup. Therefore, it would not be inconceivable to imagine that, during a decade of iconographical experimentation and variation, when new images of both Honos and the Genius were being produced, artists of the 60s were familiar with the Genius/Honos semi-nude youth-type, but may not have known exactly which attributes should belong to which deity at any given time, in conjunction with the changing visual ideologies of the six emperors of the 60s. After all, just in the 60s alone, the cornucopia was ascribed to Honos, Concordia, Aequitas, Fortuna, Felicitas, Pax, Hispania, Ceres, Annona, and even Victoria. And since the artist of the Boscoreale Cups seems to have a clear understanding of the iconography of the Neronian/Galban Virtus of the 60s, who, dressed in an Amazonian tunic, poses in a *Standmotiv*, carries a *parazonium* in one hand and a spear in the other, and rests her foot on a helmet – a motif never before rendered in pre-Neronian iconography – I believe that the artist of the Augustus Cup was producing fine art in the 60s, thereby re-dating the Boscoreale Cups to the 60s. This would also account for the semi-nude youth who carries a patera, the motif of which is also never rendered in pre-Neronian iconography. The artist understood the iconography of the contemporary images of Virtus perfectly. And he may have understood the general conception of Honos as Virtus' ideological partner, who is represented as a semi-nude youth with cornucopia, and may have likely resolved to draw from contemporary depictions of semi-nude youths with cornucopia, which just so happens to be the new Genius Augusti, the iconography of which was already influenced by the artistic conventions of Honos. What the artist did discern for the Augustus Cup is that Honos does not sacrifice at a burning altar. If the Genius Populi Romani were illustrated on the Augustus Cup, then we should expect his sacrificial altar to be also illustrated as well; and, moreover, we should expect the Genius Populi Romani to be paired with his ideological partner the Genius Senatus, as he is never paired with Roma. Thus, the semi-youth with cornucopia, coupled with his indivisible ideological partner Virtus is

undoubtedly Honos. Lastly, I propose that a re-dating of the Boscoreale Cups to the 60s is not implausible, since it meets the criterium of the *terminus ante quem* of the cups dated to the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79, and, moreover, does not preclude the possibility of an Augustan date, or the probability of a Tiberian date, in my opinion, for the Julio-Claudian monument which the visual compositions of the cups imitate.²⁴³ Moreover, the rather pristine condition of the precious-metal cups when discovered suggest a production date closer to the eruption.

But, beyond the fine details of the iconography, does the presence of the divine pair depicted on the Augustus Cup comport with the ideological composition of the scene, especially in relation to the military success of Augustus and his rise to political power? Just as I have demonstrated with the Medinaceli Reliefs and the Ara Pacis above, the attendance of Honos and Virtus in relation to Augustus' political and military accomplishments during his lifetime came to be expected. On the Augustus Cup, Augustus, whether meant to be living or deified, is surrounded by an assemblage of his personal divinities – the same divinities who accompany the emperor on the Medinaceli Reliefs (except for Venus Victrix, who may have been present, but is now lost). From the right, Mars approaches the emperor, leading with him seven personified nations, of which only the first in line, wearing an elephant-cap with ears, trunk, and tusks, can be securely identified as Africa. The presence of Mars, whose attributes include a crested helmet, *paludamentum*, spear, and *parazonium*, embodies Roman warfare, a necessary action of the emperor in order to secure Rome's borders, to protect her people, and to maintain Rome's hegemony over the civilized world. Venus approaches the emperor from the left, accompanied by Amor, and wears a diadem and heavy chiton and himation – attributes of Genetrix – yet, she gracefully carries a victoriola, identifying her also as Victrix, the divine progenitress and protectress of Augustus and the *gens Iulia*. Victoria herself extends her gift, the palm branch and the laurel wreath, to Augustus, amplifying the

²⁴³ Cf. Baratte (1991) for a more convincing dating of the monumental friezes to the Tiberian period.

emperor's success in warfare. And behind Venus arrive Honos and Virtus, the divine pair whose identities would not have been lost on the Roman viewer. For, anyone living in Julio-Claudian Rome and its environs would have become increasingly familiar with this divine coupling from their images in the Marcellan Temple of Honos and Virtus, in the Marian Temple, on the Kalenus denarii of 70, on Augustan issues minted by Aquillius and M. Durmius in ca. 19, on the Ara Pacis, on the Julio-Claudian monument from the Boscoreale Cups, and on the Medinaceli Reliefs. During the Augustan principate, the divine pair was instrumentalized in public iconography in celebration of Augustus' intrinsic political and martial excellence, embedded in his collective victories on the foreign battlefield, where *virtus* was won and *honos* procured. The divine composition illustrated on the Augustus Cup embodies this ideological theme. Having achieved martial victory from his military exploits abroad, Augustus is depicted in the center of the scene, rising above the earth, and sharing his rule with no one. As master over the nations, Augustus is approached by his personal divinities who have aided the emperor in his quest for political and martial supremacy, sanctioning his sovereignty over the universe placed in his hands: Mars, Victoria, Venus Victrix, Honos, and Virtus. The composition, magnified by the probability of the Roman victory monument it decorated, illustrates that Augustus' victories in warfare over the course of his lifetime have graduated him, both visually and symbolically, to his highest political and military office in Rome as both *imperator* and *conservator* of the Republic, replacing an era of war with a new era of peace.

III.VII: The Sebasteion of Aphrodisias

The celebration of the emperor as the leader of the world and the guarantor of Augustan peace in Roman art lined not only the streets of Rome, but also the streets of Rome's provincial polities in both the east and the west, especially among those like Aphrodisias that looked toward Rome as friend and ally. When Caesar ascended to power, an opportunity for an alliance originated between the city of Aphrodite and the dictator of Rome who claimed divine pedigree from Venus. Sometime before Caesar's assassination, Aphrodisias had secured a treaty with Rome; and Caesar himself sent a golden Eros to

Aphrodisias to be housed in the Temple of Aphrodite as an act of good faith.²⁴⁴ In a letter written in 39/8 to one of his personal agents in the city of Aphrodisias, Octavian personally considered the people of Aphrodisias to be his allies and guaranteed their safety, likely on account of the Aphrodisian resistance of the Parthians' advances led by Labienus between 41 and 39.²⁴⁵ And, subsequently, Aphrodisias was granted freedom, tax exemptions, and asylum rights, thereby strengthening Aphrodisias' relationship with the future emperor.²⁴⁶ Sometime in the 30s, C. Julius Zoilos, a freedman of Caesar and the Aphrodisian agent of Octavian, dominated the political landscape of Aphrodisias as *stephanephoros* for ten years, priest of Aphrodite and of Eleutheria for life, as well as ambassador to Rome, having likely participated in the resistance against Labienus and the Parthians.²⁴⁷ His political and military accomplishments were documented on his self-devised mausoleum constructed in Aphrodisias, the reliefs of which celebrated his personal virtues, *andreia* (*virtus*) and *timē* (*honor*) among them.²⁴⁸

Before his death in the early 20s, Zoilos began the construction of a new Temple of Aphrodite, evidenced by an inscription on the lintel of the door of the cella.²⁴⁹ Although Zoilos, unfortunately, never had the opportunity to consecrate the temple, the people of Aphrodisias continued the project, ultimately dedicating the temple to Tiberius.²⁵⁰ Sometime after the death and apotheosis of Augustus, the Aphrodisians monumentalized the street running east-west in front of the temple, adding two marble porticoes flanking the street, known as the Sebasteion. However, construction on the project transcended several principates and was not completed until the reign of Nero. According to the extant inscriptions of the Sebasteion, the complex was dedicated to Aphrodite, to the Divi Augusti (*Theoi Sebastoi*), and to the people (*demos*).²⁵¹ The façades of the north and south buildings were decorated with marble panels

²⁴⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 3.62; Reynolds 1982, no. 4, Doc. 12; Smith 1993, 5, 13; 2013, 4.

²⁴⁵ Reynolds 1982, no. 4, Doc. 10; Smith 2013, 4.

²⁴⁶ Reynolds 1982, Docs. 6-13; Smith 2013, 4.

²⁴⁷ Smith 1993, 4-10; 2013, 4-6.

²⁴⁸ See Ch. II.IX

²⁴⁹ Smith 2013, 6-7.

²⁵⁰ Smith 2013, 7, 21.

²⁵¹ Smith 2013, 5-20.



Figure 93: Sebasteion: Panel C2: Augustus and Nike. Julio-Claudian period.

carved in high relief on three storeys, each depicting a singular figure or figural group that, ultimately, culminated in a marble tapestry of historical, myth-historical, and mythological narratives. Although the panels do not convey any singular visual program, the themes of war, victory, and the Julio-Claudian emperors' martial accomplishments are transparent. The Sebasteion was indeed a monument in celebration of the *virtus* of the Julio-Claudian emperors.

Panel C2 of the south building is representative of the martial themes that constitute the Sebasteion as a victory monument of the emperors (Fig. 93). Augustus, laureate and depicted in heroic nudity, clutches a *tropaeum* in his left hand, comprising a helmet, cuirass, military tunic with *pteryges*, greaves, and a shield hanging from behind; and in his right, a spear. Victoria, or rather Nike in the east, winged and dressed in a heavy chiton and himation, positions the helmet on top of the trophy. Sitting below the trophy is a bound barbarian prisoner of war, whose forlorn visage conveys his peril and fate. Perched below Augustus' right hand is an eagle, which gazes up toward the trophy.²⁵² Although scenes depicting the emperor and Victoria together are common in the visual repertoire of Greece and Rome, the motif of the barbarian captive bound below a towering trophy derives from the contemporary visual vocabulary of Rome, stemming from the iconography created by Caesar and his moneyers in the 40s to commemorate Caesar's *virtus* from his conquest of Gaul. This trophy/prisoner motif was then reprised by Augustus' moneyers in the 20s, documenting Augustus' *virtus* from his Actian victory. Although it is unlikely that the Aphrodisian artists were replicating a pre-existing

²⁵² Cf. Smith 1987 101-4 and 2013, 128-31 for a detailed analysis of the relief.

work in Rome, they were doubtless drawing on Caesarian, or, more directly, Augustan models of victory, likely through the circulation of Augustan coins that featured this victory motif. In any case, the visual language of this relief is clear: Augustus has achieved apotheosis, symbolized by Jupiter's eagle, as a result of his martial excellence, his *virtus*. Having conquered his enemies, Augustus has stripped the barbarians of their weapons, armor, and *virtus*. *Virtus* now belongs to Augustus, emblemized by the trophy he fashioned out of his enemies' spoils. The fettered enemy of Augustus is made to appear non-threatening, reinforcing the visual message that Rome's enemies, and, therefore, Aphrodisias' enemies, have been subdued by the *virtus* of the emperor.



Figure 94: Sebasteion: Panel C9: Nike bearing a trophy. Julio-Claudian period.

Not only did the Sebasteion celebrate the *virtus* and *victoria* of Augustus, but also of the other four Julio-Claudian emperors. The victory of the emperors is the subject of Panel C9 from the south building (**Fig. 94**). A semi-nude Nike glides to the right, carrying over her left shoulder a robust *tropaeum*. The base of the relief contains the inscription *NEIKH ΣΕΒΑΣΤΩΝ*, or “the victory of the emperors.” Constructed on a knotted tree trunk, the trophy is composed of a plain cuirass with simple skirt and sword in its scabbard attached with a ribbon, as well as a helmet with a plume. That the trophy which

Nike carries represents a physical manifestation of *virtus* is certain, as *virtus* was always the product of victory in Roman military scenes. Therefore, we can imagine that the flying Nike is about to establish the *virtus* of the emperors gained in warfare. Smith suggests that, contingent upon the position of the relief,

“the victory of the emperors” inscribed on the base of the relief alludes to its flanking panels, directing the viewer’s attention toward the military prowess of Claudius on one relief and of Nero on the other.²⁵³



Figure 95: Sebasteion: Panel C10: Claudius and Britannia. Julio-Claudian period.

Panel C10 illustrates the *virtus* of the emperor Claudius that led to his victory and to the appearance of the trophy-bearing Nike depicted on the previous panel (Fig. 95). Claudius, identified by his name and title inscribed on the base *TIBEPIOS KΛAYΔIOΣ KAIΣAP*, and wearing only a helmet, balteus, and a *paludamentum* vanquishes Britannia. Britannia (*BPETTANIA*), who is personified by a woman, lies helplessly prostrate on the ground. Her expression demonstrates her anguish and despair. Her drapery, loosely clinging to her body, exposes her breasts, allegorizing her vulnerability as a defeated adversary of Rome. The visual

language of the emperor’s conquest of the “other” is clear: the *virtus* of Britannia has been expunged by the commanding emperor as he pins Britannia down with his knee, emphasizing his own martial *virtus* displayed on the battlefield against the Britons, whose country was subjugated by Claudius in 43 CE.²⁵⁴

Pendant to the Claudius relief is Panel C8, which demonstrates the *virtus* of the emperor Nero in action (Fig. 96). Nero, whose name is still partially inscribed on the base of the panel but suffered an erasure after his *damnatio memoriae* in 68 ([*NEPON*][I]) *KΛAYΔIOΣ ΔΠΟΥΣΟΣ KAIΣAP ΣΕΒΑΤΟΣ ΓΕΡΜΑΝΙΧΟΣ*, lifts the figure of Armenia (*APMENIA*) from the ground with his hands. Nero, whose head is partially preserved but kept detached from the frieze, is depicted in heroic nudity, and wears only a

²⁵³ Smith 2013, 144.

²⁵⁴ Cf. Smith 1987, 115-7; 2013, 145-7. This martial event also gives us a *terminus post quem* of 43 for this relief.

paludamentum clasped at his right shoulder, a balteus supporting his sword in a scabbard, and a helmet.²⁵⁵

The personification of Armenia is depicted nude and lifeless to underscore her vulnerability and her submission to the emperor, wearing only a Phrygian cap, boots, and a cloak around her neck. Her quiver and bow remain by her side, but removed from her lifeless body. Armenia, devoid of her *virtus* that defended her people against the Roman invasion between 58 and 63, has been conquered and subjugated by the *virtus* of the emperor, securing Roman victory over Armenia and bringing her into the domain of Nero's empire.²⁵⁶



Figure 96: Sebasteion: Panel C8: Nero and Armenia. Julio-Claudian period.

Not only do these panels illustrating Augustus, Claudius, and Nero in scenes of military conquest and victory corroborate that the visual program of the Sebasteion celebrated the martial excellence of the Julio-Claudian emperors, but so, too, did three more extant panels featuring Nike with trophy or victory wreath (C14, C20, C21), one panel depicting Tiberius with bound captive (C16), another with an unidentified Julio-Claudian emperor with trophy and captive (C18), a panel portraying Ares (C32), and, next to him, an unidentified emperor wearing a *paludamentum*, ready for battle (C33).²⁵⁷ Because all of the elements of *virtus* are cultivated within the programmatic composition of the

Sebasteion, we should expect that the goddess of the emperors' military excellence, *Virtus*, or rather some form of *Andreia* be represented. Two military goddesses do appear on the façade of the south building; however, Smith identifies both as *Roma*, thereby rendering *Roma* on the Sebasteion four times and of

²⁵⁵ Smith 1987, 117-8; 2013, 141-3.

²⁵⁶ Tac. *Ann.* 13.37-41; Dio 57.23. Subsequently, Nero was hailed as *imperator* by his armies, *supplicationes* were held, as well as a triumph, and statues and victory arches were decreed to the emperor in response to his victory over Armenia, the theme of which spills onto Panel C9.

²⁵⁷ Smith 2013: C14: 149-50; C20: 160-2; C21: 162; C16: 152-5; C18: 156-8; C32: 175-6; C33: 176-7.

four different Roma-types. Four representations of Roma would make the goddess the second most depicted figure on the Sebasteion (after Nike, the number of which is not unusual), outnumbering Aphrodite, as well as individual Julio-Claudian emperors, to whom the Sebasteion was dedicated. Therefore, it is worth reconsidering that at least one of these four very disparate and idiosyncratic representations of “Roma” should thematically be Andreia (Virtus), whose absence would be unexpected on an imperial victory monument memorializing the martial excellence of the Julio-Claudian emperors.



Figure 97: Sebasteion: C7: Roma and Ge. Julio-Claudian period.

Of the four representations of the goddess of Rome, two of them are unequivocally Roma, as one is identified by an inscription and the other is represented by the seated matron-type. Next to Panel C8, which depicts Nero and Armenia, are the labeled goddesses Roma (*ΡΩΜΗ*) and Ge (*ΓΗ*) on Panel C7 (**Fig. 97**).²⁵⁸ Roma is dressed according to the Hellenistic city-deity type with mural crown and scepter in contrast to her military disposition in Julio-Claudian representations of the goddess. Her mural crown comprises five towers and rests upon her long, parted hair. Her long chiton with sleeves envelops her

entire body and is tied with a belt high on her torso. Roma carries a scepter in her right hand and stretches her left toward a semi-nude Ge, who carries a cornucopia filled with an abundance of fruit onto which a small child clings. Although there are no extant parallels to this scene from Rome, the scene recalls the Kalenus denarius of 70 BCE, which depicts Roma and Italia in a *dextrarum iunctio* (**Fig. 8**). The scene is also

²⁵⁸ Smith 2013, 139-41.

vaguely reminiscent of the Northeast and Southeast Panels of the Ara Pacis, which feature Roma and Tellus Italiae, respectively, both in separate frames, but together in the composition on the eastern wall. However, the Roma from the Northeast Panel of the Ara Pacis is a seated-matron type, typical of the Julio-Claudian era.

The seated-matron type Roma is also found on a relief from the Sebasteion; however, the image of the goddess has been completely erased, likely for a repurposing that never occurred. Yet, there exist enough contextual elements in the scene to secure the identity of Roma on Panel D49 (**Fig. 98**).²⁵⁹ The contour of the erasure demonstrates a seated figure with her legs turned in three-quarter view toward the viewer. The height and shape of the contour of the head suggests that the figure was wearing a helmet, likely crested. A partial diagonal erasure in the upper right suggests that an attribute of the figure was also eliminated, most

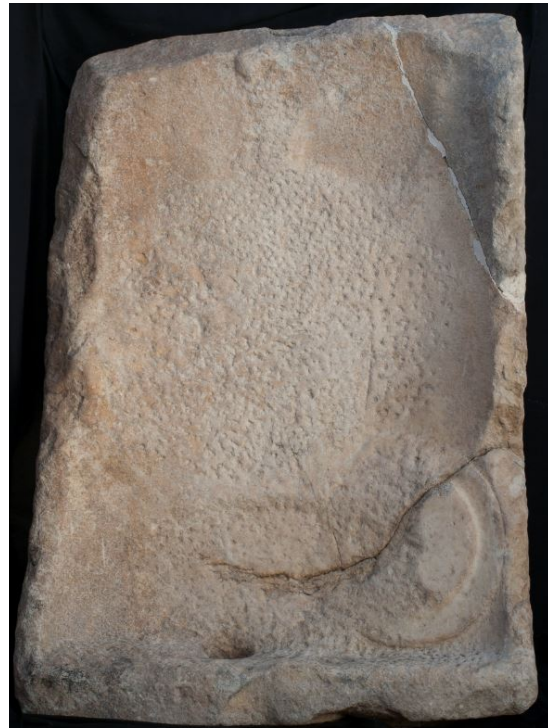


Figure 98: Sebasteion: Panel D49: seated Roma. Julio-Claudian period.

likely a scepter or spear. The only ascertainable attribute is the round shield, only partially erased at the lower right-hand corner of the relief. The shield rests against the contour of the base upon which the figure was seated, thereby substantiating the identity of the figure as Roma. The seated-matron type was not unprecedented in Aphrodisias; for, this type also appeared on the Monument of Zoilos, adjacent to Andreia and Timē, the composition of which is analogous to the contour of Roma on Panel D49, suggesting that the Monument of Zoilos may have been the archetypal model for this replication of Roma on the

²⁵⁹ Smith 2013, 271-2.

Sebasteion (**Fig. 23**). And if the Aphrodisian sculptors of the Sebasteion were drawing on local templates, such as the Roma panel suggests, then the artists would have also been conscious of the allegorical image of Andreia, who stands as the personification of Zoilos' military achievement gained during the foreign war against the Parthians in the 30s BCE. Therefore, creating a monument that recognizes the military achievements of the Julio-Claudian emperors from their own foreign wars without acknowledging their *virtus militaris* through the image of Andreia would seem unreasonable. Thus, there remain two military goddesses illustrated on the Sebasteion who Smith suggests are both Roma, but at least one of which (if not both) may be Andreia.

Panel C24 depicts an armored goddess with captive slave (**Fig. 99**).²⁶⁰ The goddess is dressed as an *imperator*, wearing a helmet, a cuirass with a gorgon flanked by two heraldic griffins, a short tunic with ornamented *pteryges*, and laced boots. A *paludamentum* drapes over her shoulders and down her side. In her right hand she wields a spear and, in her left, a shield. To her right kneels a bearded barbarian



Figure 99: Sebasteion. Panel C24: Military goddess as Andreia with bound prisoner. Julio-Claudian period.

captive. He dons an animal-skinned cloak, tied around his neck, and gazes up toward the towering military goddess above. As Smith correctly states, there are very few parallels of any kind for cuirassed females in general, and I would add, none from the Julio-Claudian era. Smith suggests that the goddess is Roma, as he argues that a local audience would immediately recognize a goddess wearing Roman imperial armor as Roma.²⁶¹ However, as I have demonstrated above, the Julio-Claudian Roma-type, with which the Aphrodisians would have been most

²⁶⁰ Smith 2013, 165-6.

²⁶¹ Smith 2013, 166.



Figure 100: Dupondius of Caracalla featuring Virtus with bound captive and trophy. Ca. 198-217 CE.

familiar is the seated-matron type, corroborated by the representation of a seated Roma on the Monument of Zoilos and on Panel D49 of the Sebasteion. And, although Panel C7 substantiates the claim that the Aphrodisians had artistic license to manipulate the contemporary Roman iconography of Roma, Roma as *imperator* and captor is unprecedented in the visual rhetoric of Roman military scenes. Virtus, however, is closely associated with the prisoners of war in Roman military scenes, as we have seen, for example, on the Triumph Relief from the Medinaceli group, as well as on subsequent issues of imperial coins. For example, a dupondius minted by Caracalla depicts Virtus with spear towering over a bound captive, the iconography of which is comparable to Panel C24 of the Sebasteion (**Fig. 100**).²⁶² The fact that Virtus is often represented with the prisoners of war, whether it be a singular composition such as one depicted on the dupondius or a triumphal scene like on the Medinaceli Reliefs, lends credence to an Andreia identification for Panel C24. Admittedly, the iconography of this military goddess is quite a departure from both the Roma and Virtus types. Her singularity can only be explained by craftsmen of the eastern provinces, who created a goddess from the martial elements they knew existed in the visual repertoire of military scenes from Rome, namely a goddess with military experience, having just come from battle – an action never performed by Roma.

Panel C17 depicts two goddesses (**Fig. 101**).²⁶³ The goddess on the right wears a short Amazonian tunic with cloak, belted at the waist, that bares her right breast. She does not wear a helmet, despite the fact that every other attribute is martial, including her balteus to support her sword (not depicted), open-toe boots, the spear in her right hand, and a small round shield that rests by her side. With her right hand,

²⁶² RIC 4 Carac. 456, 458a-b. The earliest coins depicting Virtus and a *tropaeum* are medallions struck by Commodus in 183 and in 186: Gnechi 1912, 69-70, nos. 161-3 and Tav. 88, nos. 8-10.

²⁶³ Smith 2013, 154-6.



Figure 101: Sebasteion: Panel C17: Aphrodite and Amazon goddess as Andreia. Julio-Claudian period.

she crowns the goddess on the left with a laurel wreath, who wears a heavily draped peplos and himation. The visage of the laureate goddess does not seem to possess any portrait features, but is rather idealized, which would, therefore, eliminate a Julio-Claudian family member as the identification of the figure. Smith suggests that she is an Aphrodite-Venus type, despite the lack of sophistication given to her dress. As for the Amazon goddess, Smith posits that the type is suitable for Aretē, Andreia, or Roma in the Greek east. However, we can immediately rule out Aretē because the Amazon type with martial characteristics is not suitable for Aretē, who is only

depicted as a matron figure in Greek art, never an Amazon.²⁶⁴ Thus, the type is only suitable for Andreia or Roma. The relief was incorporated into the façade of the third storey of the south building, which was completed during the principate of Nero.²⁶⁵ And even though the goddess possesses every attribute of the Roman goddess Virtus, except for her helmet, a Neronian date of the goddess does present the possibility that Roma is represented here, since Roma co-opted the image of Virtus during Nero's reign. However, it is unusual for both Roma and Virtus to be depicted *sans* helmet. For Virtus, however, there is precedent. A series of coins minted by Galba depicts Virtus, labeled, wearing an Amazonian costume and carrying a *parazonium* in one hand and a *victoriola* in the other, *sans* helmet (**Fig. 102**).²⁶⁶ Mattingly states

²⁶⁴ See the Aretē from the Library of Celsus at Ephesus, for example. Cf. Strocka, V.M. 2003. *The Library of Celsus*. Ancient Libraries in Anatolia: Libraries of Hattusha, Pergamon, Ephesus, Nysa. [Ankara]: Middle East Technical University Library, pp. 33-43.

²⁶⁵ Smith 2013, 123.

²⁶⁶ *RIC* 1² Galba 63; *BMCRE* Galba 193-5.



Figure 102: Aureus of Galba: Virtus on the reverse. Ca. 68/9 CE.

that the Galban Virtus also wears a cuirass; however, the contours of Virtus' outfit suggests a tunic.²⁶⁷ Conversely, Roma is never depicted with a bare head in Greece or Rome; she always wears a crown or helmet. As for the context of the composition, either Roma or Virtus for the identification of the Amazon goddess would be unusual, at least in Rome, because neither goddess is known to crown anyone other than the emperor, much less another female.

Erim suggests that the goddess is a composite Roma-Virtus, who crowns a Julio-Claudian family member.²⁶⁸ However, it seems unlikely that the Aphrodisians would consciously conflate the two goddesses, as they already possessed discernable prototypes for both goddesses, none of which were used to create the image of this Amazon goddess. Smith suggests that Aphrodite is crowned by Roma as a general reference to her role as foremother to the emperors, as well as a possible reference to the Parthian battle between Aphrodisias and Labienus and the Parthians in 40 BCE, where a reference to Aphrodite as Julian ancestor would be appropriate.²⁶⁹ However, the Amazon goddess as Virtus does not preclude this hypothesis, but, in my opinion, rather amplifies Aphrodisias' role in their resistance of Labienus and the Parthians made possible by the *virtus*, or rather *andreia*, of Aphrodisias' brave soldiers, Zoilos included, who risked their lives to defend their city from Rome's opponents. Long, however, suggests that the two goddesses are to be identified as Livia and Roma, respectively, because, she asserts, the context demands that it is Roma, as Virtus crowning Livia would be inappropriate.²⁷⁰ However, her argument hinges on the conjecture that the left figure is Livia, but the lack of physiognomic features of Livia precludes this identification. Moreover, the crowning of Livia by either

²⁶⁷ Mattingly 1923, 342 (*BMCRE* Galba 193-5).

²⁶⁸ Erim 1982, 165.

²⁶⁹ Smith 2013, 156.

²⁷⁰ Long 2014, 157-62.

Roma or Virtus with the laurels of victory would be illogical. Thus, Aphrodite crowned by Andreia with a laurel crown symbolizing Aphrodisias' military victory over the Parthians is not inconceivable. Andreia may be understood as conferring her military protection and her gift of *virtus*, or martial valor, on Aphrodite, the patron deity of the city whose military strength deflected the Parthian incursion between 41 and 39 BCE – the city's greatest military victory. In any case, the iconography of the goddess undoubtedly derives from the typology of the Roman Amazon warrior-woman, the prototype of which was originally conceived in the 3rd century BCE for Virtus.

Panels C7 and D49 are doubtless images of Roma, the former labeled and the latter represented as the canonical seated-matron type from the Julio-Claudian period. Because Roma is already represented twice in two disparate forms, it would be unusual and unprecedented to have Roma in Panel C24 and in C17 as two new forms of Roma, totaling four completely disparate images of Roma without visual consistency or common attributes. Therefore, it is more likely that either Panel C24 or Panel C17 represent Andreia, whose image would have been familiar to the Aphrodisians, as she was depicted on the Zoilos Monument between Roma and Zoilos. However, the iconography of the goddesses of Panel C24 and Panel C17 does not perfectly correlate with the Julio-Claudian Virtus, nor the Julio-Claudian Roma, although many of the physical elements belonging to Virtus are present. The goddess on Panel C24 wears a short tunic underneath her cuirass. She also carries a spear and wears a helmet. The prisoner of war at her side alludes to a Virtus (Andreia) identification. The goddess on Panel C17 wears an Amazonian tunic that bares her right breast and carries a spear and balteus to hold her sword. She is depicted in a *Standmotiv* – the prevailing type of Virtus since the 3rd century BCE. It is, however, interesting to note that Timē from the Zoilos Monument is represented bare-breasted and crowning Zoilos with her right hand, congruous with the goddess on Panel C17, who crowns Aphrodite with her right hand. That the artist of Panel C17 used the Zoilos monument as a model and conflated the iconography of the two goddesses, Andreia and Timē, is not impossible. In any case, the goddess in question is unlikely Roma and more likely Andreia as

imagined by a Greek sculptor with limited comparanda, based on the historic typologies of Roma and Virtus from the Republic and Julio-Claudian period.

The Sebasteion celebrated not only the benevolent relationship between Aphrodisias and Rome, but also the hegemony of the Roman empire under which the Aphrodisians lived. Having been a political and military ally of Rome since the time of Caesar, and most willingly under the principate of Augustus, the Aphrodisians designed the Julio-Claudian panels of the Sebasteion to emphasize the strength of Rome and their approbation of Rome's military success over the course of six decades, giving credit to Augustus, Tiberius, Claudius, and Nero. The sculptors of the Sebasteion panels seem to possess some knowledge of the contemporary martial iconography created in Rome, but also re-conceptualized many Roman elements in order to be comprehensible to a Greek audience. The thematic formulae of war and victory are clear, both to a Greek and a Roman viewer. However, the identity of each individual may not have been so easily recognizable, hence the addition of labels for each figure. Unfortunately, no label of Andreia survives. However, a Roman dynastic monument commemorating war, victory, and the *virtus* of four Julio-Claudian emperors in Aphrodisias without an image of Andreia/Virtus would be exceptional, especially since the Aphrodisians were already aware of her image on the prominent Zolios Monument. Therefore, it seems more likely than not that Panels C24 and/or C17 depict an Aphrodisian adaptation of the Roman Virtus as the Greek Andreia. The image of Andreia would have harmoniously unified the martial themes of the Roman iconography on the Sebasteion and underscored the *virtus* of each Julio-Claudian emperor, whose martial valor eschewed the enemies of the Roman empire and ushered peace into Aphrodisias.

III.VIII: Nero and the Jupiter Column at Mainz

Although Nero was by no means a military man, the emperor recognized that *virtus* was an imperative virtue as commander-in-chief of the Roman military. Without maintaining the *virtus* of the Julio-Claudian dynasty (the *virtus Augusta*), Nero had little chance of sustaining authoritative power as *imperator*. He may have been regarded as an incompetent guardian of Rome, feeble in protecting Rome

from her unbridled enemies. Therefore, at the time of his accession, Nero had little choice but to prove his military worth, sustaining an earnest rapport with the people of Rome, who wanted nothing more than the guarantee of security and peace. The same potential inadequacy in *virtus* stoked fear in his predecessor and adoptive father Claudius. Knowing that only success in a foreign war produced martial *virtus*, Claudius invaded Britain in 43, reigniting the foreign military expedition planned by Caligula, and concluding the conquest Caesar had begun roughly a century earlier.²⁷¹ Claudius celebrated a senate-sanctioned triumph in the same year; and his military achievements were celebrated over the course of his principate.²⁷² The senate decreed two triumphal arches for Claudius, one in Gaul and one in Rome, the latter of which was dedicated in 51/2 on the Via Lata.²⁷³ The inscription of Claudius' triumphal arch in Rome reads: "The senate and Roman people [dedicated this] to Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, son of Drusus, pontifex maximus, tribunician power 11 times, consul five times, hailed *imperator* 22 times, censor, *pater patriae*, because he received the surrender of eleven kings of the Britains, conquered without loss, and he first brought the barbarian peoples across the Ocean under the authority of the Roman people."²⁷⁴ Just as Caesar subjugated the Gauls, Augustus the Egyptians, and Tiberius the Germans, Claudius ushered the Britains into the realm of the empire. The *virtus* he acquired was documented by his triumphal arch on the Via Lata, which may been decorated with the image of the goddess Virtus herself.²⁷⁵ Therefore, Nero was perpetually reminded of his adoptive father's military achievements, from which Claudius, ultimately, garnered favor and support from the Roman people through the *pax Augusta* sustained by Claudius. Peace, however, did not last through Claudius' reign.

²⁷¹ Suet. *Claud.* 17; *Cal.* 43-6; Dio 60.21-2; Tac. *Agr.* 13; Caligula celebrated a triumph over Gaul, cf. Suet. *Cal.* 47.

²⁷² Suet. *Claud.* 17; Dio 60.21-2; Josephus *Jewish Wars* 3.1.

²⁷³ Dio 60.22. Cf. Barrett, A.A. 1991. *Claudius' British Victory Arch in Rome*. *Britannia*, Vol. 22, pp. 1-19.

²⁷⁴ CIL VI 40416 = CIL VI 920 = CIL VI 31203 = AE 1948, 80 = AE 2004, 38. Translation adapted by Barrett 1991, 12.

²⁷⁵ See discussion on the *Arcus Novus* Reliefs in Chapter V.G.

In 53, the Parthian king, Vologaeses, settled his brother Tiridates on the throne of Armenia, a Roman client state.²⁷⁶ From the beginning of his reign in 54, Nero was presented with the opportunity to follow in his adoptive father's footsteps and seize *virtus* for himself by overseeing an expedition to reinstate Roman hegemony over Armenia. In 55, Nero selected Gnaeus Domitius Corbulo to reestablish Rome's presence in Armenia.²⁷⁷ In 58, after years of planning, Corbulo led an incursion into Armenia, many of whose people sympathized with the Parthians.²⁷⁸ Having marched on the capital of Armenia, Artaxata, the inhabitants voluntarily opened the city gates and surrendered in order to ensure their safety, despite the fact that the city was, nevertheless, razed to the ground.²⁷⁹ Consequently, in 63, an agreement was ratified that Tiridates would reprise his role as king of Armenia under the control of Rome.²⁸⁰ Thus, Armenia was ushered back into the dominion of Rome. Nero's victory over Armenia is the subject of Panel C8 of the Sebasteion, which illustrates the subjugation of a lifeless personification of Armenia by a valiant Nero in heroic nudity, signifying the transferral of *virtus* from the defeated Armenia, which lost its collective martial supremacy, to Nero (**Fig. 96**).

Although Nero was never on the frontline of battle, he nevertheless was the recipient and beneficiary of the military successes achieved by the Roman armies under his command. For Nero's victory over Parthia, he was hailed as *imperator* and *supplicationes* were held in Rome by senatorial decree. The senate also approved the establishment of statues and arches in Rome to commemorate Nero's military achievement.²⁸¹ A statue was also erected in Armenia inscribed with Nero's political accomplishments as emperor: "Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, *imperator*, pontifex maximus, holding tribunician power 11 times, consul four times, *imperator* nine times, *pater patriae*."²⁸² Tacitus also makes it clear that

²⁷⁶ Tac. *Ann.* 12.50-1; 13.34; Braund 2013, 84-96.

²⁷⁷ Tac. *Ann.* 13.8; Barrett et al. 2016, 83-7.

²⁷⁸ Tac. *Ann.* 13.34;

²⁷⁹ Tac. *Ann.* 13.41; Dio 62.19; Barrett et al. 2016, 87-92.

²⁸⁰ Tac. 15.7-16; 26-29; Dio 62.21-23; Suet. *Nero* 13. Malitz 2005, 60; Barrett et al. 2016, 108-17.

²⁸¹ Tac. *Ann.* 13.41; 15.18; Dio 62.19, 23; Suet. *Nero* 13.

²⁸² *ILS* 232; *CIL* 6742; Barrett et al. 2016, 116. This inscription is similar to the legend struck on the obverse of Nero's issues of coins featuring the Temple of Janus: *NERO CLAUD[IVS] CAESAR AVG[VSTVS] GER[MANICUS] P[ONTIFEX] M[AXIMVS]*

the senate decreed that *tropaea* of the Parthians be erected in Rome on the Capitoline Hill, which attests to the senate's acknowledgment of Rome's superior *virtus* over the *virtus* of the Parthians, under the command of Nero.²⁸³ The pomp culminated with a triumph held during Tiridates' presence in Rome in 66.²⁸⁴ The triumph, the triumphal arch of Nero on the Capitoline, and, especially, the Parthian trophies solidified the people's faith in the emperor's *virtus*, who not only claimed a diplomatic victory over Parthia, but also brought Armenia under the Roman yoke. Nero offered the victory laurels to Jupiter and closed the Temple of Janus between 65 and 67, making a grand public gesture of peace as a result of his acquired *virtus*.²⁸⁵ Nero's victory over Armenia was enough for him to command respect for his *imperium* by the military, the senate, and the people. His need to prove his *virtus* was satisfied by his Armenian expedition. Without his achieved *virtus*, Nero would not have been hailed as *imperator* by the armies or *pater patriae* by the people, as he proved his worth as commander-in-chief, nor would he have been able to shut the doors of the Temple of Janus, securing peace for the Roman people.

After his victory over Armenia, the goddess Virtus became a significant figure in Neronian issues of coins between 60 and 64. As discussed above, Nero's moneyers minted several issues of aurei and denarii featuring Virtus positioned in a *Standmotiv*, albeit with some characteristic changes to her iconography (**Fig. 90**).²⁸⁶ Virtus is depicted wearing a crested helmet over short hair. Her short, belted tunic does not reveal her right breast. She wields a reverse spear in her left hand and a *parazonium* in her right. She rests her right foot on a pile of armor comprising shields and helmets, most probably in

T[RIBVNICIA] P[OTESTATE] IMP[ERATOR] P[ATER] P[ATRIAE]: "Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, pontifex maximus, with tribunician power, *imperator*, *pater patriae*," cf. *RIC* 1² Nero 50-8; 263-585; Barrett et al. 2016, 115.

²⁸³ Tac. *Ann.* 15.18.

²⁸⁴ Dio 62.23.

²⁸⁵ Suet. *Nero* 13; *RIC* 1² Nero 50-8; 263-585: Reverse legend: *PACE P[OPVLI] R[OMANI] TERRA MARIQ[VE] PARTA IANVM CLVSIT*: "For the peace of the Roman people on land and on sea, (Nero) closed (the temple of) Janus;" Malitz 2005, 60; Barrett et al. 2016, 115-6.

²⁸⁶ *RIC* 1² *Nero* 25-6, 31-2, 36-7, 40-1; *BMCRE Nero* 27-8, 40-2, 45-8; Mattingly 1923, clxxiii, who, erroneously believes Virtus is here depicted as a male. The reverse legend reads: *PONTIF[EX] MAX[IMUS] TR[IBUNICIA] P[OTESTATE] X CO[N]S[VL] IIII P[ATER] P[ATRIAE] EX S[ENATVS] C[ONSVLTO]*: "pontifex maximus, with tribunician powers ten times, consul four times, *pater patriae*, by decree of the senate."

commemoration of Nero's Parthian victory. Nero's moneyers also, contemporaneously, reformulated the iconography of Roma (discussed above), who no longer sits on her throne, but stands, dressed in an Amazonian tunic and cloak (**Fig. 91**). Roma also wears a crested helmet on top of her short hair, but carries a shield upon which she inscribes, presumably, Nero's victory over of the Parthians.²⁸⁷ It should be noted that Virtus stands left and Roma right, likely as another visual distinction between the two similar goddesses. Nevertheless, the goddess Virtus and her gift of *virtus* were ascribed to Nero during his lifetime and officially recognized by the senate.

As for monumental images of Virtus propagated during the reign of Nero, she appears on a columnar monument dedicated to Nero in the Roman *castrum* of Mongontiacum on the Rhine (Mainz). The so-called Great Jupiter Column of Mainz was commissioned by two local men from the Canabarii population of Mongontiacum, according to its inscription.²⁸⁸ Not only does the inscription provide insightful information about the dedicants, but it tells us the name of the governor of Germania Superior at the time, Publius Sulpicius Scribonius Proculus, who served between the years 63 and 67, thus giving us a *terminus post quem* and a *terminus ante quem* for the construction of the Great Jupiter Column.²⁸⁹ It has been theorized by Spickermann that the column was built in support of Nero during the Pisonian conspiracy of 65, when he survived an attempted coup and assassination manufactured by the Roman

²⁸⁷ RIC 1² Nero 27-8, 33-4, 38-9, 42-3; BMCRE Nero 29-30, 36-7, 43-44, 49-51. The seated Roma type returns to Nero's mints after the fire of 64-5 due to its familiarity and again in 68 in response to the revolt of Vindex, as Mattingly (1923, clxxv) suggests, for the assertion of the capital against the rebellious provinces.

²⁸⁸ "To Jupiter Optimus Maximus, for the well-being of the Emperor Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus, by the community of the Canabarii. In the time of the governorship of Publius Sulpicius Scribonius Proculus, in the care and expense of Quintus Iulius Priscus and Quintus Iulius Auctus. The sons of Venicarus, Samus and Severus, sculpted it:"

I(OVI) O(PTIMO) M(AXIMO) PRO [SA]L[VTE] ~~NERONIS~~ CLAV[D]I CAESARIS AV[G(VSTI)] IMP(ERATORIS) CANABA[RII] PV[BL]ICE P(VBLIO) SVLPICO SCRIBIONIO PROCULO LEG(ATO) AVG(VSTI) P[R(O) P]R(AETORE) CVRA ET IMPENSA Q(VINTI) IVLI PRISCI ET Q(VINTI) IVLI AVCTI. SAMVS ET SEVERVS VENICARI F(ILII) SCULPSERVNT: CIL 13.11806 = ILS 9235 (pg. 192) = AE 1906: 53 = AE 1907: 67 = AE 655 = Mainz / Mogontiacum, Germania Superior. See also Bauchhenss 1984, 4-5; Espérandieu 1922, 381. Note also the erasure of *Neronis* made after Nero's death and *damnatio memoriae*.

²⁸⁹ Spickermann 2015, 419-20; Bauchhenss 1984, 32-3.

senator Gaius Calpurnius Piso.²⁹⁰ But the martial themes of the column, in conjunction with the welfare of Nero, must allude to his military success in Armenia during the Parthian Wars between 58-63.

The reliefs of the Great Jupiter Column comprise a pastiche of Roman gods sculpted on two rectilinear socles and five column drums, 28 in total. Because there are no references to any local deities and because the gods derive from the classical pantheon, it is believed that the sculptors Samus and Severus borrowed traditional religious iconography from the visual repertoire of Rome, where similar columns were erected, providing a direct antecedent for the first Jupiter column erected outside of Rome.²⁹¹ The fact that the column depicts both Roma and Virtus on the same drum lends credence to Rome's iconographical influence on the two sculptors, Samus and Severus. The identification of the two goddesses is not, however, without controversy. Both goddesses look strikingly similar, attesting to the fact that, in the 60s, under the principate of Nero, the image of Roma appropriated many iconographical elements of Virtus, rendering Roma an Amazonian goddess in the manner of Virtus.



Figure 103: Jupiter Column from Mainz: Amazon goddess carrying parazonium and holding a trophy. Ca. 60s CE.

Appearing between the god Vulcan on the left and the goddess Ceres or Tellus on the right, the first Amazonian goddess is positioned in a *Standmotiv*, with her weight shifted to her right leg, just as Virtus appears on the Marcellinus denarius, possibly on the Ara Pacis, on the Augustus Cup from Boscoreale, and on the Sebasteion. The goddess wears a short tunic, belted twice at the waist, which reveals her right breast (**Fig. 103**). She wears a crested Attic helmet on top of her short hair and pelt boots which extend mid-

²⁹⁰ Spickermann 2015, 420; 2006, 179-181; Tac. *Ann.* 15.51.

²⁹¹ Spickermann 2015, 419-20; Beard et al. 1998a, 346.

calf. Her left hand clings to the top end of a tree trunk that comprises a *tropaeum*, crafted with a cuirass, military tunic with decorative *pteryges*, and helmet with cheek pieces. Against her right arm rests a *parazonium*, very similar to the Virtus from Budapest (**Fig. 2**). As I have demonstrated above, the *tropaeum* was an immediate physical symbol of *virtus* as early as the 3rd century BCE, when Marcellus deposited the *spolia opima* acquired at the Battle of Clastidium before founding the cult of Virtus. The *tropaeum* was, then, employed by Caesar, on his issues of coins in 47/6 to publicize his own *virtus*. This motif of Virtus and the *tropaeum* will appear again on coins minted by Commodus, Septimius Severus, and Caracalla. There is nothing about the iconography of this goddess that suggests that she is anyone other than Virtus. However, the identification of this Amazonian goddess as Virtus remains the minority within the scholarship of the Great Jupiter Column. Scholars have labeled the goddess Honos 11 times, and Roma five times.²⁹² Only Espérandieu has identified this Amazonian goddess as Virtus.²⁹³ The goddess' stance, crested helmet, *parazonium*, double-belted Amazonian tunic, and pelt boots are central to the



Figure 104: Jupiter Column, Mainz: Amazon goddess carrying vexillum. Ca. 60s CE.

identification of Virtus. And the fact that she wraps her left arm around a Roman *tropaeum* suggests that she is the goddess of martial valor. However, Bauchhenss, in his monograph on the Great Jupiter Column at Mainz, makes a perceptive observation that the spatial field provided for the goddess is not well suited for an image of Roma seated on a pile of armor, but rather for a standing image of Roma depicted with a *tropaeum* made of armor to respect the tall and narrow space allocated for the figure. Therefore, he identifies her as Roma.²⁹⁴

²⁹² See Bauchhenss (1984, 12) for a table of previous scholars' identifications.

²⁹³ Espérandieu 1922, 385.

²⁹⁴ Bauchhenss 1984, 17.



Figure 105: Reconstruction of the Amazon goddess on the Jupiter Column at Mainz.

The other Amazonian goddess, depicted between Ceres or Tellus on the left and Vulcan on the right, is identified as Virtus 14 times by previous scholars, and as Roma twice, including by Espérandieu (**Fig. 104**).²⁹⁵ The goddess is also represented in a *Standmotiv*. She wears a similar crested Attic helmet as the previous Amazonian goddess and pelt boots on her feet. In her left hand, she carries a *vexillum*, much as she does on the relief from Budapest (**Fig. 2**). Unfortunately, the attribute which she carried in her right hand has broken away; however, Espérandieu posits that she held a crown, likely of

laurel.²⁹⁶ As for her dress, only the top half survives. However, the upper half is Amazonian. Pinned on her left shoulder, the garment is twice belted at the waist and reveals her right breast, similar in manner to the previous Amazon goddess. The restoration carried out by the Landesmuseum in Mainz depicts this Amazonian goddess wearing a short tunic (**Fig. 105**). Unfortunately, however, there exists no physical evidence to corroborate this reconstruction of her dress and attribute in her right hand. Espérandieu believes that the dress was, in fact, long not short, which would help the viewer distinguish between the two goddesses Roma and Virtus.²⁹⁷ If this were the case, then Roma would wear a long chiton with breast exposed, possibly similar to the one worn by Roma on the Northeast Panel of the Ara Pacis. However, Bauchhenss, I believe correctly, identifies this Amazonian goddess as Virtus by the fact that there exist no representations of Roma carrying a *vexillum*.²⁹⁸ Virtus carries a *vexillum* not only on the relief from

²⁹⁵ Bauchhenss 1984, 13.

²⁹⁶ Espérandieu 1922, 384.

²⁹⁷ Espérandieu 1922, 384.

²⁹⁸ Bauchhenss 1984, 7, 17.

Budapest, but also on a fragment of a much larger Domitianic relief now housed in the Vatican Museums (see below).²⁹⁹

The pair of goddesses doubtless represents Roma and Virtus; however, they are both clearly modeled on archetypal images of Virtus. The archetypal image of Virtus was then co-opted to represent Roma here since the space is not conducive to the seated-matron Roma-type. Moreover, the sculptors Samus and Severus appear to have borrowed their templates of Roman gods from a monument or several monuments in Rome, as there seems to be no indication of the presence of any provincial deities. Or perhaps the images of Virtus and Roma in Neronian coinage at the time inspired the sculptors to create parallel Amazonian goddesses for their Jupiter Column, since the images of the two Amazonian deities on Neronian coins were already in circulation before the construction of the monument in Mainz. This would account for their short haircuts on the column just as they are on the coins. The relevance of the depiction of the twin Amazonian goddesses on the Jupiter Column lies in the fact that Nero associated himself with these two martial deities – a militarized Roma and the goddess of martial valor, Virtus – both of whom represented Nero’s political and military power.



Figure 106: Denarius of Nero featuring a triumphal arch decorated in relief. Ca. 60s CE.

There are no other surviving representations of Virtus attributed to the Neronian principate. However, the innumerable coins featuring Virtus minted in the 60s and the fact that Nero had re-conceptualized the Marcellan Virtus type suggests that Nero took considerable interest in the goddess. The Great Jupiter Column, which depicts a “Neronian” Virtus type, corroborates Nero’s association with the goddess. And although there are no surviving Neronian reliefs in Rome, issues of coins minted in the

²⁹⁹ Virtus also carries a *vexillum* on military-themed sarcophagi of the late-2nd century CE, e.g. a sarcophagus in the Ducal Palace, Mantua, cf. Kampen, N.B. 1981. *Biographical Narration and Roman Funerary Art*. *AJA*, Vol. 85, No. 1, pp. 47-58, Fig. 12.

60s depicting the Arch of Nero demonstrate that the arch was heavily decorated in figural reliefs and statues of the gods (**Fig. 106**).³⁰⁰ The arch was crowned with the triumphal quadriga of the emperor. To the right, a winged Victoria proffers a laurel crown to the emperor. To the left stands a female deity carrying a cornucopia in her left hand, possibly Pax or Concordia to symbolize the concord settled between Rome and Parthia. Two other figures acting as acroteria, both helmeted and carrying swords, flank the scene. A towering statue of Mars with helmet and shield stands on a base in a niche on the left side of the arch. The face of the arch comprises registers of eight figures, two in the spandrels. And the plinths of the arch also depict figural scenes, likely meant to represent the arch's sculptural friezes. That Virtus and Roma were two of the many figures depicted on the Arch of Nero is reasonable. The left and right acroteria, helmeted, and carrying a *parazonium*-like object, appear to be wearing short tunics. The figures are reminiscent of Virtus and Roma on the Jupiter Column from Mainz.

Although Nero never once set foot on the battlefield, he understood the importance of *virtus militaris* – the martial worth of Rome's *imperator* – without which he would have never been able to retain his authority. Nero spent his formative years living in the shadow of his adoptive father Claudius' military accomplishments in Britain, which contributed to the emperor's long reign. Claudius himself, albeit not a military man, learned from the mistakes of Caligula, who chose the pleasures of life over the ruthless reality of war, save an abbreviated campaign along the Rhine in 39.³⁰¹ However, the duty of being the Roman emperor necessitated a successful military reputation; and both Claudius and Nero realized this necessity. Although Nero loved the Roman theater more than the theater of war, he recognized his responsibility to uphold the *virtus* of the Julio-Claudian family – the *virtus Augusta*. From Caesar to Nero, *virtus* became an increasingly significant characteristic of the Roman emperor in his role to maintain

³⁰⁰ *BMCRE Nero* 183-90, 329-34; *RIC 1² Nero* 393, cf. also 143-50, 392, 432-3, 498-500, 573-5. For the Arch of Nero in Rome, cf. Kleiner, F. 1985. *The Arch of Nero in Rome: A Study of the Roman Honorary Arch before and under Nero*. Giorgio Bretschneider Editore, Roma; De Maria 1988, 113-115.

³⁰¹ Suet. *Calig.* 43-4.

imperium. Unfortunately for Nero, his single victory, albeit more diplomatic than martial, was not enough to help sustain his power in Rome. His Armenian affair was becoming increasingly overshadowed by a growing number of conspiracies in Rome in the mid-60s, reflecting the discontent for Nero's leadership over the empire. Moreover, a revolt occurred in Gallia Lugdunensis, led by its governor Vindex, who encouraged Galba, the governor of Hispania Tarraconensis, to seize the throne for himself. Galba's mutiny was also supported by the future emperor Otho, the governor of Lusitania. Having been formally addressed as "Caesar" by his troops in April of 68, Galba marched on Rome.³⁰² Nero ended his own life in June of 68, extinguishing the *virtus Augusta* that reigned over Rome since Caesar crossed the Rubicon in 49 BCE. In 68/9 CE, the *virtus Augusta* of the Julio-Claudian dynasty was supplanted by the military aptitude of four provincial military commanders, all of who were hailed as Roman emperor because of their *virtus*.

III:IX: The Necessity of *Virtus* during the Year of the Four Emperors

In the beginning of his career, Galba was popular. Born in 3 BCE to an affluent patrician family, Galba was capable of climbing the rungs of the *cursus honorum*. He became a praetor at an early age, and then governed Aquitania for almost a year. Soon afterwards, his political career was accelerated by his election to the office of *consul ordinarius* in 33 for six months. He was then appointed governor of Upper Germany, where he and his army made such a profound impression on Caligula during a visit that no other commander and army had ever received greater commendation or rewards from their emperor. Thereafter, he achieved the rank of proconsul and governed Africa for two years. For his service in both Germany and Africa, Galba was offered the triumphal regalia, as well as membership in three priesthoods. Proving that Galba was a man of *honor*, Nero offered Hispania Tarraconensis to him, where he governed for eight years.³⁰³ His popularity in the western provinces was predicated on his reputation of *honor* and

³⁰² Suet. *Galb.* 11; Dio 63.27; Tac. *Hist.* 1.6, 13; Plut. *Galb.* 4; Barrett et al. 2016, 266.

³⁰³ Suet. *Galb.* 6-8; Plut. *Galb.* 3; cf. also Tac. *Hist.* 1.49 for his military praise; Morgan 2006, 32-4.

virtus, namely as a successful politician and military commander. Therefore, it is no great wonder that Vindex, the governor of Gallia Lugdunensis, encouraged Galba to join his open rebellion against the crown and to challenge Nero's sovereignty in April of 68.

During Nero's reign, revolts in Britain, Gaul, Africa, Spain, Germany, Syria, and Judaea were taking place; and Parthia still remained a menace to Rome's security.³⁰⁴ Unfortunately, Nero was an incompetent military commander, despite a martial, albeit diplomatic, victory over Armenia. Rome desperately needed new leadership; and the safety and security of the people necessitated a military emperor like Galba – a leader in *virtus*. Everyone knew that Nero was losing control of his legions and of the praetorian prefect in Rome; and Galba realized that other legionary commanders might also bid for the throne. Therefore, with the support of his own troops, that of Vindex in Gaul, and of Otho's in Lusitania, Galba proclaimed himself emperor, launching Rome into civil war. In order to garner further support for imperial power, Galba initiated a war of visual rhetoric, disseminating coins that lauded his *virtus* and other military characteristics, subverting the imperial issues being minted in Rome, as well as those being minted in Vienna in March/April of 68 in support of Vindex's mutiny.³⁰⁵ After Galba joined Vindex's cause in April, his mint in Tarraco struck an abundance of military themed coins that reinforced his martial capacity and countered the military reputations of both Nero and other contenders for the empire, especially Clodius Macer, the legate of Numidia, who was striking his own coins to promote his own name between April and June of 68.³⁰⁶ The visual war of *virtus* among the provincial mints continued through the rest of year.

³⁰⁴ Boudicca's rebellion in Britannia; Vindex and Verginius Rufus in Gallia and Germania, Clodius Macer in Africa, Galba in Hispania, Licinius Mucianus in Syria, and Vespasian dealing with the Jewish rebellion.

³⁰⁵ Mattingly 1923, cxciv.

³⁰⁶ Mattingly 1923, cxc; for Clodius Macer, cf. clxxxvi-clxxxviii; Carson 1978b, 28. Galba had Clodius Macer assassinated during his reign, cf. Tac. *Hist.* 1.7.

In lieu of the profile of Galba on the obverse of the issues minted in Tarraco, the coins depict only the gods, undermining Nero's lawful reign. The coins consistently reference "the people," in the form of the Genius Populi Romani, or *PR* in the legend, directly appealing to the masses to repudiate the existence of Nero.³⁰⁷ The profiles of the Genius Populi Romani, Hispania, Bonus Eventus, Iuppiter, Roma, Venus, Libertas, Salus, and Moneta and Concordia [*Hispaniarum et Galliarum*] were commonly depicted on the obverses. Except for the Genius, the reverses are thematically martial, exalting the military characteristics of Galba and his cause: Mars Ultor (*MARTI VLTORI*), the war god of vengeance against his enemies; the *corona civica* with the legend *OB CIVES SERVATOS*, exemplifying the wreath Galba received "for the saving of the citizens;" Pax (*PACI PR*), for the promise of peace to the Roman people; *Restituta PR*, coupled with *Libertas* on the obverse, signifying the promise of liberty and the reclamation of Rome's integrity; *SPQR*, pandering to the senate of the Roman people; and Victoria [*PR*], for the promise of the Roman people's victory over Nero's authority.³⁰⁸ All of the representations of the gods depicted on the reverses are modeled on Republican prototypes except for two: Roma and Virtus, whose images were reformulated to



Figure 107: Civil Wars denarius featuring Virtus. 68 CE.

convey the idea of a new era for a martial Rome on the offensive, governed by a man of *virtus*.

On a denarius featuring Bonus Eventus on the obverse, Virtus, identified by her legend *VIRTUS*, stands facing left on the reverse (**Fig. 107**).³⁰⁹ She is, for the first time, unhelmeted, and appears to have her hair pulled back and tied in a chignon. She wears her canonical Amazonian tunic and pelt boots; however, the tunic reveals her left breast rather than her right. In the crook of her left arm, she carries a *parazonium* (or ship's rudder). In the palm of her right hand, she proffers a winged victoriola on a globe, facing away from her. Victoria carries a wreath in her right hand. In the

³⁰⁷ Mattingly 1923, cxc.

³⁰⁸ Mattingly 1923, cxii-cxciii; *BMCRE Civil Wars* 1-8, 12-13.

³⁰⁹ *BMCRE Civil Wars* 14; Mattingly 1923, cxciii.

iconographical repertoire of Virtus, the goddess had never been displayed without her helmet, nor had she ever before presented a victoriola in the palm of her hand. Because the coin was likely struck before the death of Nero, the reverse must allude to the acclamation of Galba as Roman emperor in Spain, rather than to a proleptic victory over Nero. That Virtus no longer needs her helmet and that victory is claimed lend credence to this hypothesis. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that it is Virtus who grants victory, not Victoria, possibly due to the fact that no war ever actually ensued. Nevertheless, victory for the empire was received, thanks to the *virtus* of Galba. This is the first of several disparate coin issues featuring Virtus under the jurisdiction of Galba that demonstrate the importance of *virtus* during the destabilization of Rome in 68/9.

Similarly, the Spanish mint under Galba transformed the image of Roma into an almost mirror image of Virtus, underscoring the impact the role of *virtus* had on the revolution and evolution of Rome during civil strife. On an aureus depicting Bonus Eventus on the obverse, a new Roma, *ROM[A]*



Figure 108: Civil Wars aureus featuring Roma Renascens. 68 CE.

RENASC[ENS], is “reborn” on the reverse (Fig. 108).³¹⁰ Standing right, rather than left as Virtus does, Roma is dressed in an Amazonian tunic that exposes her right breast, as well as in a pair of pelt boots. She wears a crested helmet. In her left hand, she carries a transverse scepter tipped with an eagle. In her right hand, Roma holds a winged victoriola standing on a globe. The victoriola extends her right hand to crown Roma with a wreath. The mint also struck a similar Roma,

labeled *ROMA VICTRIX*, who holds a laurel branch and sets her foot on a globe.³¹¹ The mint in Tarraco has promised a regeneration of Rome, victorious, while under the aegis of Galba. Needless to say, the images of Virtus and Roma are comparable: both stand in an Amazonian tunic and both carry a victoriola.

³¹⁰ *BMC RE CIVIL WARS* 10-11; *RIC 1² Civil Wars* 8-11; Mattingly 1923, cxcliii.

³¹¹ Mattingly 1923, cxcliii, 291.

However, Virtus is the divinity who gives victory and Roma who receives it. That Virtus is the producer of victory under the regime of Galba and Roma the beneficiary of that victory is clear.

Conversely, the Gallic mint in operation from early March–May of 68, and presumably located in Vienna, struck a series of Roma coins with the profile of Roma’s head on the obverse, accompanied by the legend *ROMA RESTITUTA*.³¹² The moneyers also struck an issue of coins featuring Virtus that diverges from



Figure 109: Civil Wars denarius featuring Virtus on the obverse. 68 CE.

Taracco’s Virtus. On the obverse is a bust of Virtus, labeled *VIRT* (Fig. 109).³¹³ She wears a decorative crested helmet with plume in the back. Her wavy strands of hair are kept mid-length, draped against the nape of her neck. A similar denarius depicts the same visage of Virtus on the obverse with shield and spears on the reverse. This edition includes her full name: *VIRTVS* (Fig. 110).³¹⁴ It is not known whether this series of coins was minted before or after Galba joined Vindex’s rebellion;



Figure 110: Civil Wars denarius featuring Virtus on the obverse and shield and spears on the reverse. 68 CE.

however, the disparity between the two images of Virtus during the Civil Wars, namely that one is battle-ready and the other is granting victory, suggests that this particular series was struck before Galba was hailed as emperor in Spain in April of 68. The series

rather likely supports the rebellion of Vindex. However, when Galba became emperor in June, the Viennese mint used a similar die of Virtus to strike imperial issues for Galba. Nevertheless, that coins emblazoned with the goddess Virtus were generated contemporaneously in the provinces and not at all

³¹² Mattingly 1923, cxcv; *BMCRE CIVIL WARS* 19-20.

³¹³ *BMCRE CIVIL WARS* 18; *RIC 1² Civil Wars* 78.

³¹⁴ *RIC 1² Civil Wars* 78a.

in Rome substantiates the importance of *virtus* as an important symbol of martial qualification for all contenders during the Civil Wars.

In June of 68, the accession of Galba proved that *virtus* was essential to the well-being of the empire. The senate declared Galba emperor; and from that moment on, Rome would no longer endure an ineffectual emperor when it came to the safety and security of Rome. Unfortunately for Galba, as soon as he received the news from the senate in Rome, his authority was immediately challenged. Before Galba arrived in Rome, the prefect of the praetorian guard Nymphidius Sabinus seized control of Rome for himself, believing that Galba was old and weak, and claiming that he was a scion of Caligula.³¹⁵ Moreover, in Germany, the legions declared their own Verginius Rufus as emperor; however, he eventually conceded to Galba.³¹⁶ Nevertheless, Galba replaced Verginius Rufus with Hordeonius Flaccus as governor of Germania Superior, eliminating the possible threat of another claimant.³¹⁷ He also installed Vitellius as governor of Germania Inferior. Nearby, the Rhine legions felt snubbed in receiving no rewards from Galba for their services in defeating Vindex and the Gauls, but, initially, decided not to act.³¹⁸ Moreover, when Galba finally arrived in Rome, he was attacked by a legion originally formed by Nero; however, the cavalrymen of Galba slew a great many of them.³¹⁹ For fear of another insurrection against his rule, Galba considered a successor, for whom Otho was suggested.³²⁰ Galba also continued his campaign of martial propaganda in order to bolster his reputation in Rome and abroad.

When Galba became emperor, he claimed that his lineage descended from Jupiter on his father's side; and, on his mother's, from Pasiphae.³²¹ Furthermore, Galba had the mints in Rome, Tarraco, and Vienna strike issues of coins with Galba's profile on the obverse, accompanied by a new addition of Caesar

³¹⁵ Plut. *Galb.* 8-9, 14; Suet. 11; Tac. *Hist.* 1.5; Morgan 2006, 40.

³¹⁶ Plut. *Galb.* 10, 18.

³¹⁷ Plut. *Galb.* 10.

³¹⁸ Suet. *Galb.* 16; Plut. *Galb.* 22.

³¹⁹ Plut. *Galb.* 15; Tac. *Hist.* 1.6.

³²⁰ Plut. *Galb.* 21.

³²¹ Suet. *Galb.* 2.

Augustus to his title on his early coinage: *IMP[ERATOR] SERV[IVS] SVLP[ICIVS] GALBA CAESAR AVG[VSTVS]*.³²² Thus, Galba associated himself with the most esteemed military commanders of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, Caesar and Augustus. That Galba hoped the Roman people would connect Galba's sovereignty with the Julio-Claudians is corroborated by his issues of coins from the mints in Spain and Gaul that depict the profile of Augustus with the legends *AVGVSTVS*, *AVGVSTVS DIVI F*, *CAESAR AVGVSTVS*, or *DIVVS AVGVSTVS*, as well as an issue of coins displaying the comet of Caesar with the legend *DIVVS IVLIVS*.³²³ The mint in Rome, however, struck issues with Galba's profile on the obverse and the portrait of Livia as *DIVA AVGVSTA* on the reverse, indicating that Galba took an interest in divinization.³²⁴

As for his claimed virtues, Galba minted a variety of political and military qualities that defined his sovereignty: *CONCORDIA PROVINCiarUM*, to celebrate the unification of the provinces under Galba; *LIBERTAS PR*, and *FELICITAS PUBLICA* make transparent reference to the freedom of the people and the resumption of the interest of the people in political matters; *SALVS GEN[ERIS] HUMANI* and *SALVS AVGVSTA*, who represented the continuation of the well-being of the human race, maintained by Galba; *VICTORIA PR*, symbolizing the Roman people's victory in accordance with Galba's victory as elected *imperator*; *PAX AVG[VSTI]*, celebrated the peaceful accession of Galba, according to Mattingly, but also the promise of the continuation of Augustan peace under Galba's rule; and *VIRTVS*, who represented the martial capacity of the state, made possible by the martial capacity of its leader.³²⁵

The coins depicting Virtus struck by Galba are characteristic of the emperor's preoccupation with his military reputation with the hope that it would maintain his support not only of the people, but also, most importantly, of the armies. The mint in Tarraco continued to replicate their version of Virtus from the

³²² Mattingly 1923, ccii-cciii.

³²³ *BMCRE CIVIL WARS* 44-60.

³²⁴ *BMCRE Galba* 3-13, 54, 166-169, 201-2. Livia had assisted Galba at the beginning of his career, cf. Suet. *Galb.* 5; Plut. *Galb.* 3; Mattingly 1923, cciv.

³²⁵ Mattingly 1923, ccii-ccvi.



Figure 111: Denarius from Carthage featuring Virtus. 68 CE.

period of Galba's revolt. A Spanish aureus illustrates Galba, with the legend *SER GALBA IMP CAESAR AUG P M TR P*, "Servius Galba *imperator* Caesar Augustus, pontifex maximus, with tribunician power," on the obverse; and, on the reverse, an unhelmeted Virtus, labeled *VIRTUS*, holds a *parazonium* in her left hand and a wreath-carrying victoriola in the palm of her right (**Fig. 102**).³²⁶ On a rare coin minted in Carthage on behalf of Galba, Virtus, labeled, is similarly

portrayed on the reverse. However, she appears to be helmeted and the legend includes the decree of the senate *SC* (**Fig. 111**).³²⁷ Nevertheless, the message of the reverse is the same as it was during the revolt: the *virtus* of Galba brought victory to both Galba and to the senate and people of Rome, who rejoiced in the death of Nero in unison.³²⁸

A unique series featuring Virtus must have been imagined by Galba himself since the Spanish, Gallic, and Roman mints struck it, attesting to the significance of *virtus* as a reflection of Galba's



Figure 112: Denarius of Galba featuring Galba on the obverse and a male Virtus on the reverse. 68/9 CE.

martial character. On the obverse of this series is the conventional profile of Galba, bearing the simple legend *IMP GALBA* (**Fig. 112**).³²⁹ On the reverse, for the first time in Roman iconography, Virtus, labeled *VIRTUS*, is depicted as male. This masculine Virtus stands

in a typical *Standmotiv*, resting his weight on his right leg. He is completely nude as his muscular body bears no clothes nor body armor. He does, however, wear a helmet, ostensibly of the bell type. In the

³²⁶ *BMCRE GALBA* 193-195; *RIC 1² Galba* 63, 102-116.

³²⁷ *BMCRE GALBA* 272; *RIC 1² Galba* 521.

³²⁸ *Tac. Hist.* 1.4.

³²⁹ *BMCRE GALBA* 50-52, 196, 200; *RIC 1² Galba* 12, 32, 178-9, 218-22, 235-6.

crook of his right hand, he carries a *parazonium*; and with his left hand, he leans on a spear. It is not immediately transparent why Galba decided to challenge the conventional image of Virtus as an Amazonian woman. Here, Virtus likely represents the emperor in heroic nudity. Galba assumes the role of Virtus in carrying her personal attributes and in standing in her iconic *Standmotiv* position and becomes the embodiment of *virtus* himself.³³⁰ Idealized images of Roman generals in the buff reach back to the late Republic, when the earliest specimens of visual hybridity comprising a portrait and an athletic body materialized, for example with the famous “Tivoli General” and the Delian “Pseudo-Athlete.” As for the emperors themselves, the idea is not unprecedented. A heroic bronze of Augustus can be found in the Naples Archaeological Museum, originally from the so-called Augusteum of Herculaneum. And the Sebasteion of Aphrodisias includes Augustus, Tiberius, Claudius, and Nero in iterations of the heroic nude.



Figure 113: Dupondius of Galba featuring an equestrian Galba on the obverse and Virtus on the reverse. 68/9 CE.

Similarly, a Gallic dupondius, likely minted in Vienna shows a clear portrait of Galba as Virtus. Labeled *SER GALBA IMP*, Galba is depicted on horseback in military garb and wearing a wind-blown *paludamentum* on the obverse (**Fig. 113**).³³¹

The reverse displays an unusually severe and masculine Virtus, labeled *VIRTVS*, wearing a helmet and cloak around the shoulders. Milhous has pointed out the masculine features of the bust, namely the prominent chin, nose, and brow, and has argued that the profile actually portrays Galba in the guise of Virtus once again.³³² The coin confirms that *virtus* during both the Civils Wars and Galba’s rule was ideologically charged, necessitating that Galba display himself not only as the beneficiary of *virtus* but *virtus* in the flesh, perhaps to intimidate any challengers.

³³⁰ Or, according to Milhous (1992, 135-6), a heroized statue of Galba.

³³¹ *BMCRE Galba* 215; *RIC 1² Galba* 93.

³³² Milhous 1992, 136.

Moreover, the helmet type is very interesting. It appears to be not only crest-less, but also of the bell-helmet type – a type worn by Virtus on the Republican Aquillius denarius of 71 BCE (**Fig. 7**) and possibly by one of the original Republican cult statues of Virtus in Rome, likely the one in Marius' Temple of Honos and Virtus. That Galba wanted to be associated with the glory and *virtus* of the generals of the Republic is plausible, thereby investing martial clout in the armies.

Although both of these series of coins illustrating the image of Galba as Virtus may seem hubristic, the message of these issues was clearly important to the emperor. As a gifted general, *virtus* was the foundation upon which Galba constructed his entire regime; and he wished to publicize his *virtus* in every corner of the empire, sending a message to anyone who might attempt to repudiate his reign. However, the promulgation of his *virtus* may not have been enough to maintain his sovereignty, as Suetonius asserts that his popularity and prestige were greater when he obtained his title than when he actually ruled.³³³

During his reign, Galba was apparently controlling, greedy, and reckless. He did little to restore the depleted treasuries under a profligate Nero, revoked all of the generosities granted to others by Nero, and exacted harsher tax penalties.³³⁴ According to Suetonius, there was escalating contempt for Galba among all the classes of people and especially among the soldiers; for, although they were promised larger remuneration for swearing fealty to the emperor, Galba had replied that it was his duty to select the troops, not to buy them off, infuriating soldiers across the empire.³³⁵ His rigidity and discipline, which were once esteemed by his soldiers, now afflicted him.³³⁶ Thus, on the Kalends of January, 69 CE, the armies of Upper Germany initiated a mutiny, not only because they were defrauded of their promised largesse, but also to uphold the honor of their previous beloved commander Verginius Rufus, who was replaced by

³³³ Suet. *Galb.* 14; cf. also Tac. *Hist.* 1.49.

³³⁴ Suet. *Galb.* 14; Tac. *Hist.* 1.5.

³³⁵ Suet. *Galb.* 16; Plut. *Galb.* 2; Tac. *Hist.* 1.5; Morgan 2006, 46-50.

³³⁶ Tac. *Hist.* 1.5.

Galba with the unpopular Hordeonius Flaccus.³³⁷ When Flaccus called his soldiers to renew their vows of allegiance to the emperor, they openly rebelled and razed every statue of Galba they could find.³³⁸ A few days later, Galba received word that the legions of Upper Germany had committed treason, as they demanded a new emperor in Galba's place.³³⁹ The legions initially proclaimed Vitellius as the new emperor.³⁴⁰ This event precipitated Galba's decision to choose an heir. Galba's praetorian prefect Cornelius Laco recommended Piso Licinianus, a man of *nobilitas*, whose father was consul in 27 CE. And on January 9th, Galba selected Piso Licinianus, curiously a man with no military reputation, as his heir of title, throne, and property, much to the chagrin of Otho.³⁴¹

In commemoration of his new heir Piso Licinianus, Galba minted his final issues of coins, many of which feature fewer militant gods.³⁴² There seems to have been a shift from martial intent to an appeal



Figure 114: Denarius of Galba featuring a seated Roma on the reverse. 69 CE.

to the people. *FIDES PVBLICA*, *LIBERTAS PVBLICA* and *PAX AVG[VSTA]* with the addition of *P[ATER] P[ATRIAE]* to Galba's title likely pandered to the Roman people rather than to the armies to keep him on the throne. As for the goddess Roma, she once again reprises her role as a seated deity rather than a standing one in various issues. She also loses her epithets *Renascens* and *Victrix*.³⁴³ The Gallic and Roman mints struck a more familiar image of Roma seated on a pile

of armor (**Fig. 114**).³⁴⁴ She holds a spear in her right hand and rests her left arm on a large round shield. She wears a crested helmet, yet no longer a short Amazonian tunic. Rather, she assumes her Julio-Claudian

³³⁷ Plut. *Galb.* 22; Suet. *Galb.* 16; Tac. *Hist.* 1.8.

³³⁸ Plut. *Galb.* 22.

³³⁹ Tac. *Hist.* 1.12.

³⁴⁰ Plut. *Galb.* 22.

³⁴¹ Plut. *Galb.* 23; Suet. *Galb.* 27; Tac. *Hist.* 1.14; Morgan 2006, 60-1.

³⁴² Kraay 1956, 33-55.

³⁴³ Except for one issue minted in Lugdunum with the legend *Roma VICTRIX*: *BMCRE Galba* 243.

³⁴⁴ *BMCRE Galba* 87-96; *RIC 1² Galba* 238-49, 311-2.

chiton, which covers her legs down to her feet and exposes her right breast. The iconography likely derives from her image depicted on the Southeast Panel of the Ara Pacis.

However, another die demonstrates a more martial variant. Roma, seated on a pile of armor now wears a short Amazonian tunic dressed above the knees (**Fig. 115**).³⁴⁵ In lieu of resting her arm on a shield, she carries a scepter in her right hand and a *parazonium* in the crook of her left arm. Now, the only



Figure 115: Denarius of Galba featuring a seated Roma on the reverse. 69 CE.

difference between Roma and Virtus is that one is sitting and one is standing. Thus, the influence of the iconography of Virtus makes its most direct influence on Roma during the time of Galba. That martial *virtus* was still an essential quality of not only Galba, but of the integrity of Rome is clear.

Virtus appears one more time in the coinage of Galba, perhaps on her most famous coin: Galba's Honos and Virtus denarius (**Fig. 10**).

The denarius, previously thought to be a posthumous issue minted by Vespasian as an homage to Galba, but shown by Kraay to have been minted in Rome at the end of Galba's reign, depicts the traditional coupling of Honos and Virtus, as they were ideologically paired by Marcellus in 208 BCE, by Marius in the 90s BCE, and by Augustus on the Ara Pacis (and posthumously on the Medinaceli Reliefs and on the Boscoreale Cups).³⁴⁶ As noted above, the statuesque Honos and Virtus are organized in a composition similar to the pair depicted on the Marcellinus denarius, which celebrated the cult statues of Honos and

³⁴⁵ *BMCRE Galba* 97; *RIC 1² Galba* 238-49, 446-7. Another variant from Lugdunum shows a seated Roma holding a victoriola in her left hand and resting her arm on a *parazonium* with the legend *ROMA VICTRIX*: *BMCRE Galba* 243, 248; and another with a victoriola in her left hand and a spear in her right: *RIC 1² Galba* 484.

³⁴⁶ For the initial but erroneously dating of a posthumous coin by Vespasian, cf. Mattingly 1923, ccxii-ccxviii, 351-61; Kraay (1956, 33-55) clearly shows that the four dies featuring Honos and Virtus were also used by Vitellius, who was not posthumously honored by Vespasian, and, therefore, could not be an original Vespasianic die. He argues that the so-called "posthumous" dies must have been created at the very end of Galba's reign, around the time in which he chose his successor. After Galba's death, the dies were still new and readily available to Vitellius and then Vespasian, who only minted coins from one of the dies in 71. I would also add that Suetonius (*Galb.* 23) makes it clear that Vespasian detested Galba, who, Vespasian claims, sent assassins to Judaea to have him murdered.

Virtus housed in Marcellus' Temple. Honos stands on the left, facing Virtus. He is nude from the waist up, carries a lance in his right hand, and cradles a cornucopia in his left. Virtus stands right, facing Honos. Her image is canonical. She is positioned in a *Standmotiv*, placing her right foot on a muscular cuirass, and leaning on a spear in her left hand with the tip turned down.³⁴⁷ She wears a crested helmet and a double-girded Amazonian tunic that divests her right breast, as well as a cloak draped in the back. In her right hand, she wields her standard *parazonium*. The question as to why Galba minted this series likely in early January of 69 deserves investigation.

Grant has suggested that the tercentenary of Q. Fabius Verrucosus' Temple of Honos occurred around this time.³⁴⁸ However, the temple was dedicated in 233 BCE, placing the tercentenary in 67 CE, during the reign of Nero. Thus, to say he celebrated the tercentenary of the Temple of Honos is not entirely accurate. Therefore, I propose two possibilities for Galba's decision to strike a new Honos and Virtus series. Since Galba was losing the support of the military, he entreated the senate and the people for their support and selected a non-military man, Piso Licinianus from political *nobilitas* – a man of *honos* – to be his heir in order to strengthen his position. That the Honos and Virtus issues, which were most likely minted around the time he adopted Piso Licinianus, represent the Galban dynasty is possible. The *virtus* of Galba and the *honos* of Piso Licinianus would be consolidated on the reverse of this issue. And the balance of *honos* and *virtus* in Rome's leadership would have been restored. Or, in the second case, because Galba was already a man of *honos*, having been praetor, consul, proconsul, and governed three provinces, Honos returns to Virtus' side for the first time since the reign of Augustus to represent the virtue which he appeared to be lacking during his own reign. In this case, Galba attempted to reestablish the people's faith in his policies in publicizing his *honos*, restoring the balance of *honos* to his *virtus* – the

³⁴⁷ Pace Mattingly (1923, ccxvi), who believes that Virtus placed her foot on a boar's head, which, he thought, symbolized the Gallic revolt of late 69 – early 70. Pace Milhous (1992 138), who believes that the object is still a boar's head, symbolizing valor in hunting. Cf. also Stevenson 1982, 465.

³⁴⁸ Grant 1950, 87, no. 3; Kraay 1956, 41.

two virtues that are capable of making an emperor [appear] great. In either case, it does seem likely that Galba had plans to restore Marcellus' Temple of Honos and Virtus at the Porta Capena, clearly to glorify Virtus – certainly one of his cardinal virtues; however, the privilege was, ultimately, procured by Vespasian.

Due to the fact that Otho was insulted by Galba's selection of his heir, he devised a plan to assassinate Galba and Piso Licinianus. Having entered the *castra*, Otho delivered a speech to the praetorian prefect, allying himself with the troops who desired the same goal: kill Galba. According to Tacitus, Otho states that the senate and the Roman people called upon the *virtus* of the soldiers to defeat Galba: "The senate and the Roman people share our same desire: they call upon your *virtus*, for strength lies within you all in making these honorable plans happen, and without you, no matter how excellent the plans, they will become null and void."³⁴⁹ It is interesting to note that, as Galba had solidified his own reputation in *virtus*, Tacitus has Otho return *virtus* from the individual to the collective, namely to the praetorians guards, whose *virtus* ideologically overcame the *virtus* of Galba. On the Kalends of January, Galba and Piso Licinianus were slain in the Forum by an entourage of cavalrymen at the behest of Otho.³⁵⁰ Otho was subsequently hailed as emperor on the same day by the troops, possessing their full support.³⁵¹ The *virtus* that Galba once claimed as his alone during his entire reign was reinstated as an integral virtue to the soldiers by Otho. This may be the reason why Otho never depicted Virtus on the reverse of any of his imperial issues; or perhaps because Virtus was too closely associated with Galba now.

No other emperor up to this point had invested so much interest in Virtus as Galba had, attested by his many issues of coins featuring Virtus in such a short period of time. His appearance reflects that of Virtus except in heroic nudity on the reverse of one of his series, in profile of another, paired Virtus with

³⁴⁹ Tac. *Hist.* 1.38: *Idem senatus, idem populi Romani animus est: vestra virtus expectatur, apud quos omne honestis consiliis robur et sine quibus quamvis egregia invalida sunt.*

³⁵⁰ Plut. *Galb.* 24; Suet. *Galb.* 19-20; Tac. *Hist.* 1.41; Morgan 2006, 70-1.

³⁵¹ Plut. *Galb.* 25.

Victoria for the first time, and he even issued coins depicting Roma in the guise of Virtus. This is the first time that Roma and Virtus are practically indistinguishable in iconography, indicative of the fact that the supremacy of Rome was predicated on the *virtus* of the emperor. If it were not for Roma's legend, she would have been most certainly classified as Virtus. The military-themed coinage helped Galba prove himself as a successful and capable military commander, having had his *virtus* recognized in several of the western provinces and Africa. However, his shortcomings lay in his political governance, his lack of *honos*, which is why I believe he selected Piso Licinianus, a rising politician, rising in rank along the *cursus honorum*, rather than selecting Otho, whose severity and martial reputation resembled Galba's. Because Galba's support among the troops was diminishing, he petitioned to the people and the senate to consider his political qualities, disseminating issues of coins featuring non-hybristic images of Virtus, accompanied by her political counterpart, Honos. Honos had disappeared from the imperial coinage since Augustus, who was the last emperor to mint a series featuring the god. Because Honos had represented political aptitude since the time of Marcellus and publicized to demonstrate a leader's ability to rule on the senate floor, it is not surprising that Honos disappeared under the rest of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, the emperors of which likely did not see a necessity to advertise their *honos*, since they possessed sole *imperium* with tribunician and veto powers. Honos was no longer needed. However, the revival of Honos under Galba seems to suggest that Galba was losing support and his *virtus* alone was not enough to sustain his authority. Therefore, he promoted not only his *virtus*, but also his *honos* at the time in which the armies started to rebel, pandering to the people to recognize not only his martial standing, but also his political capacity. However, Galba did not have enough time to right his wrongs, incurring contempt in Rome and especially galvanizing the odium of Otho. Otho killed the man who finally understood, right before his death, the ideological importance of *honos* and *virtus* – the two pillars of virtue that led to the successful leadership of the Roman principate. However, Galba's reputation in *honos* and *virtus* was eradicated by Otho, expunging any opportunity of achieving the political and military honor, glory, and fame through

the peace he intended his *virtus* to deliver. Unfortunately for Galba, it was the *virtus* of the Flavians which reinstated peace to Rome.

Chapter IV: *Virtus Flavia*: The Goddess Virtus and the Flavian Emperors

IV.I: The Virtus of Vespasian and Titus

*But Caecina, after the defection of the fleet became known, sent away the majority of his troops on remaining military duties and, using the empty camp to his advantage, called the leading centurions and a few soldiers into headquarters. There, he extolled the 'virtus' of Vespasian and the strengths of his forces... Then, with respect to those who were present and had already undertaken their oath, he encouraged the rest of the troops, still astonished by this new development in the war, to pledge allegiance to Vespasian.*¹

-Tacitus *Hist.* 3.13

In the fall of 69, amidst the civil war between Vitellius and Vespasian, Caecina, Vitellius' leading general, current consul, and victor over Otho, was sent to the Po Valley by Vitellius to resist the forces of Vespasian under the command of Marcus Antonius Primus; however, instead, he committed treason against his emperor and defected to the Flavian side. Having caught wind of the news that the Vitellian fleet at Ravenna deserted Vitellius, Caecina assembled his ranking officers into the camp's headquarters and encouraged them to join him in pledging allegiance to Vespasian, whose *virtus* he praised (*Vespasiani virtutem...extollit*). Caecina, albeit officially Vitellian, recognized that the *virtus* of Vespasian was inherently superior to the *virtus* of Vitellius, and succeeded in convincing his own soldiers that Vitellius' war was a lost cause against the martial excellence of Vespasian.² And he was not wrong. On December 20th of 69, Primus' forces stormed the capital and forced Vitellius into the streets, where he was butchered by the Roman people who supported Vespasian. On the very next day, the senate proclaimed Vespasian, a *novus homo*, as emperor of Rome.³

¹ At Caecina, defectione classis vulgata, primores centurionum et paucos militum, ceteris per militiae munera dispersis, secretum castrorum adfectans in principia vocat. Ibi Vespasiani virtutem virisque partium extollit... Mox incipientibus qui conscii aderant, ceteros re nova attonitos in verba Vespasiani adigit.

² Tac. *Hist.* 3.13-4; Jos. *BJ* 4.11.2.

³ Tac. *Hist.* 3.84-6; Jos. *BJ* 4.11.4-5; Suet. *Vit.* 17; Dio 64.21, 65.1.

The recognition of Vespasian's *virtus*, however, did not begin here. Having been born in 9 CE into an undistinguished family from Falacrinum with little ambition to pursue a political career, Vespasian followed the martial path of his older brother and enlisted in the military.⁴ His first assignment took him to Thrace, where he spent several years in a legion of Poppaeus Sabinus, governor of Moesia, giving Vespasian his inaugural martial experience.⁵ After his tour in Thrace and with a growing interest in pursuing a political career, Vespasian held service in the Vigintivirate which allowed him to pursue the quaestorship in the mid-30s.⁶ In 39, Vespasian was elected as praetor, claiming victory over leading candidates.⁷ Because the praetorship conferred a power to command, Vespasian's success testifies to his martial talent and potential in military leadership. Upon Claudius' accession, Vespasian became legate of Legio II Augusta and commanded in Britain during Claudius' invasion of the island in 43. In Britain, Vespasian won distinction for his role in conquering the tribes and capturing the kings, which, according to Tacitus, illuminated his path of fate, i.e. to the principate.⁸ Suetonius states that Vespasian fought 30 battles with the enemy, subjugated two powerful tribes, more than 20 villages, and the Isle of Wight, partly under the leadership of Aulus Plautius and partly under Claudius himself. For his valor in Britain, Vespasian was bequeathed the *ornamenta triumphalia* – the triumphal regalia – only bested by Plautius' *ovatio* and the emperor's triumph. Moreover, Vespasian was granted two priesthoods and was, ultimately, awarded a consulship in 51.⁹

In 63, Vespasian became the proconsul of Africa; and, in the last three years of Nero's reign, he was placed in charge of three legions in Judaea, where his brother Sabinus was prefect and his son Titus was Vespasian's legate when the Jewish insurrection occurred in 66.¹⁰ According to Suetonius, Vespasian

⁴ Suet. *Vesp.* 1-2; Levick 2005, 8.

⁵ Suet. *Vesp.* 2; Tac. *Ann.* 4.46-51; Levick 2005, 8.

⁶ Suet. *Vesp.* 2; Levick 2005, 8.

⁷ Suet. *Vesp.* 2; Levick 2005, 9-10.

⁸ Tac. *Agr.* 13; Levick 2005, 16-9.

⁹ Suet. *Vesp.* 4.

¹⁰ Suet. *Vesp.* 4; Sil. Ital. 596-600; Levick 2005, 23-5.

was selected by Nero not only because the Jewish revolt called for an ample army and an ambitious leader with tried military experience, but also because Nero felt no threat from Vespasian due to the obscurity of his family and name.¹¹ Nero was correct in that Vespasian was not to be feared for his family and name; however, what Nero did not foresee was that it was Vespasian's *virtus* which was to be feared by the emperor of Rome. Vespasian had been cultivating his military credibility since the reign of Tiberius, which was acknowledged not only by Claudius, who award him the *ornamenta triumphalia*, and by Caecina, who convinced the Vitellian forces to follow his *virtus*, but also by Vespasians' own troops in July of 69, along with the legions in Egypt and Syria, and the states of Sophene, Cilicia, Achaia, Asia, Pontus, Armenia, all of whom recognized the power and potential of Vespasian's *virtus* that would not only put him on the throne, but keep him on the throne.¹²

When Vespasian finally arrived in Rome from Alexandria, where he secured the grain supply for Rome in mid-70, the war in Judaea was still raging. While Vespasian settled political affairs in Rome – attending meetings with the senate, implementing new tax measures to reduce the debt of the previous administrations, and commencing restoration projects on civic and sacred works, as well as on the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, which burned down during Primus' occupation of Rome – Titus was placed in charge of completing the conquest of Judaea.¹³ Titus was a replicate of his father. He had a strong military background, having grown up in a military family. As tribune of the military both in Germany and in Britain during Claudius' invasion, Titus merited a martial reputation in perseverance, according to Suetonius. After obtaining the position of quaestor in 67, he subjugated two strategic cities in Judaea as legionary commander.¹⁴ Moreover, his reputation in *virtus* was clearly recognized by his father, the proclaimed emperor as of the 1st of July, 69, who entrusted the war in Judaea to him while he settled

¹¹ Suet. *Vesp.* 4.

¹² Suet. *Vesp.* 6; Tac. *Hist.* 2.79-81.

¹³ Dio 65.9-10; Jos. *JW* 4.11.5, 7.2.1; Tac. *Hist.* 2.82.

¹⁴ Suet. *Tit.* 1-4.

matters in Egypt. In April of 70, Titus besieged the capital of Judaea, Jerusalem, whose fall would secure one of the most disruptive provinces under the hegemony of Rome. And on the 30th of August, Titus crushed the Jewish forces and sacked the city of Jerusalem, culminating in the obliteration of the Second Temple. The city, according to Josephus, yielded to the *Ῥωμαίων ἀνδραγαθία*, “the martial valor (i.e. the *virtus*) of the Romans.”¹⁵ Consequently, Titus was hailed as *imperator* by his forces.¹⁶ However, having been offered many a crown of laurel by neighboring provinces, he refused them all, modestly declaring that his victory was obtained not because of his military prowess or the bloodshed of his enemy, but by divinity and received it on his father’s behalf.¹⁷ Nevertheless, Titus’ *virtus* and, by proxy, the *virtus* of his father were publicly recognized and honored as a Flavian virtue.



Figure 116: Denarius of Vespasian featuring Vespasian on the obverse and Virtus on the reverse. 70 CE.

Sometime in 70, two mints from two disparate provinces began to issue coins featuring the goddess Virtus, most likely in conjunction with the occupation of Judaea. An uncertain mint in Gaul, possibly Narbo, according to Mattingly, struck a series of Virtus

coins, likely Vespasian’s first. The profile of Vespasian adorns the obverse, encapsulated by the legend *IMP CAESAR VESPASIANVS AVG* (**Fig. 116**).¹⁸ The reverse depicts a canonical image of Virtus, accompanied by the legend *VIRTVS AVGVST[I]*, “the *virtus* of the emperor.” Virtus stands to the left in a typical *Standmotiv*. She wears a crested helmet, a double-belted Amazonian tunic that exposes her right breast, a mantle that drapes over her left arm, and boots. In her right hand, she wields a reverse spear; and, in her left, her iconic *parazonium*. The legend is significant, for this is the first time that *virtus* was

¹⁵ Jos. BJ 7.1.1; Tac. Frag. Hist. 2; Suet. Tit. 5; Dio 65.9, 12.

¹⁶ Jos. BJ 6.6.1.

¹⁷ Philostrat. Apoll. 6.29.

¹⁸ BMCRE Vesp. 371e; RIC 2² Vesp. 1379, 1388, 1537.

unequivocally associated with the emperor's title *Augustus*. Thus, the *virtus* of Vespasian was officially recognized and his message of his personal martial valor was disseminated across the empire for the first time during his principate.



Figure 117: Denarius of Vespasian featuring Virtus on the reverse. 70 CE.

The mint in Antioch struck a series of aurei and denarii also in 70, depicting a divergent image of Virtus.¹⁹ On the obverse is the profile of Vespasian with the same legend as above. On the reverse, Virtus, again labeled *[VIRTVS] AVGVS[TI]*, stands facing right (Fig. 117). She wears a crested helmet, an Amazonian tunic that does not bare one of her

breasts, and high boots. She carries a spear in her right hand and a *parazonium* in her left. Next to her right leg is a round shield; and her left leg is lifted and set on a *rostrum*.

That Virtus does not reveal one of her breasts is not unprecedented, for Nero covered the bosom of Virtus to distinguish her from his new Roma series. And, perhaps, since this image was created in the east, her modesty disassociates her from the image of an actual barbarian, which could have been considered offensive to the emperor's eastern acolytes. The shield is a new addition to the accoutrements of Virtus; however, we will see this again. As for the *rostrum*, Vespasian gained a victory against the Jewish naval fleet on the Lake of Tiberias (Sea of Galilee) in 67, while Titus led the cavalry on the plain nearby, killing a total of 6,700 men. This victory directed by both Vespasian by sea and Titus by land precipitated the surrender of Galilee.²⁰ The importance of this naval battle is substantiated by the fact that Vespasian and Titus paraded the *rostra* of the defeated Jewish fleet through the streets of Rome during their joint triumph in 71. Thus, it is conceivable that Virtus, with her foot on the *rostrum* on this series of coins from Antioch, symbolizes the *virtus* of the Flavians, which overwhelmed the *virtus* of the Jews on land and on sea.

¹⁹ *BMCRE Vesp.* 499-501; *RIC 2² Vesp.* 1552.

²⁰ *Jos. BJ* 3.10.9-4.1.1, 7.5.5; Levick 2005, 33.



Figure 118: Denarius of Vespasian featuring Honos and Virtus on the reverse. 71 CE.

Sometime in 71, the mint in Rome struck its only series featuring Virtus under the principate of Vespasian (**Fig. 118**).²¹ Having possessed the dies featuring Honos and Virtus conceived by the moneyers of Galba in 69, Vespasian recycled them, but for good reason. Dio narrates that upon his return from Egypt in 70, Vespasian repaired the sacred buildings in Rome, one of which, he states, was the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus.²² Dio does not recount any other sacred space by name; however, Pliny the Elder recounts that Vespasian restored the Temple of Honos and Virtus, painted by two famous Roman artists Cornelius Pinus and Attius Priscus.²³ That the Honos and Virtus coinage minted by Vespasian alludes to his restoration of the Temple of Honos and Virtus is credible. The images of the deities on the reverse are likely representations of their cult statues within the temple. Honos, wearing a fillet, stands semi-nude at the left. He leans on a staff in his right hand and carries a cornucopia in his left. Virtus dons a high-crested helmet. She wears a single-belted Amazonian tunic that divests her right breast. A mantle drapes from behind. She leans on a spear in her left hand and wields a *parazonium* in her right; and her right foot is set upon a helmet (or cuirass on a variant die). The importance of the temple to Vespasian is underscored by the fact that he commissioned two of Rome's best painters Cornelius Pinus and Attius Priscus to decorate the temple.

Vespasian did not mint any other Virtus coins during his reign, likely to preserve the fact that he had restored the Temple of Honos and Virtus, the deities of which would naturally be associated with his

²¹ *BMCRE Vesp.* 531, 760; *RIC 2² Vesp.* 79, 232.

²² Dio 35.10.

²³ Pliny *NH* 35.120: *Post eum fuere in auctoritate Cornelius Pinus et Attius Priscus, qui Honoris Virtutis aedes Imperatori Vespasiano Augusto restituenti pinxerunt*: "After him [Famulus] in reputation were Cornelius Pinus and Attius Priscus, who painted the temples of Honos and Virtus, which were restored by Emperor Vespasian Augustus." The accusative plural *aedes* makes it clear that this restoration belongs to Marcellus' Temple of Honos and Virtus at the Porta Capena, which comprised two adjoining temples, and not to Marius' Temple of Honos and Virtus, which was not a double temple. *Contra* Levick (2005,26), who states that Vespasian restored Marius' Temple of Honos and Virtus, for which there is no evidence.



Figure 119: Aureus of Vespasian featuring Judaea and a trophy on the reverse. 71 CE.

name. Moreover, he no longer needed to prove his *virtus* or *honor*. He was the principal political and military leader of Rome, under whose authority Judaea was brought to her knees. He celebrated his *virtus* in other victory compositions. In 71, Vespasian minted his famous *IVDAEA CAPTA* series that features a female personification of Judaea in mourning, exemplifying Judaea's loss of *virtus*. The reverse of an aureus demonstrates this motif, which traces its origins to the coinage of Caesar,

the reverses of which represented the subjugation of Gauls and the loss of Gallic *virtus* (Fig. 119).²⁴ Judaea, veiled and crouching on the ground, turns away from a trophy placed behind her, composed of a helmet with cheek-pieces, an oblong shield, a round shield, a cuirass, two greaves, and two round shields at the bottom. These are the military accoutrements that once belonged to the Judaeans army, signifying their military might, their *virtus*, now in the possession of the Romans. There sits a despondent personification

of Judaea, bereft of *virtus*, which can no longer defend its people.



Figure 120: Denarius of Vespasian featuring a cuirassed emperor and Judaea. Ca. 71 CE.

The *virtus* of Vespasian and the lack of *virtus* of Judaea is further emphasized by another *IVDAEA CAPTA* series, this time depicting Vespasian (or Titus), who emulates the image of *Virtus* (Fig. 120).²⁵ On the reverse, Judaea mourns under a palm tree, and to her left stands either Vespasian or Titus in a *Standmotiv*. The military general is wearing a

helmet, cuirass, a military tunic, *paludamentum*, and boots. He leans his body on a reverse spear and he cradles a *parazonium* in the crook of his left arm. His left foot is perched on a helmet, symbolizing the

²⁴ *BMCRE Vesp.* 31-42, 44b with *IVDAEA CAPTA*, 335-7, 348, 357, 370, 387f, 608-9; *RIC 2^d Vesp.* 1-3, 308, 1315-6, 1332.

Vespasian also recycled the exact motif with two heraldic captives as Caesar's coinage, see *BMCRE Vesp.* 343. For trophy with the legend *DE IUDAEIS*, "from Judaea," see Mattingly 1930, 62, *BMCRE Vesp.* 402. Cf. also Carson 1978b, 36 (no. 475). For an analysis on the Judaea Capta types, see also Cody, J.M. 2003. *Conquerors and Conquered on Flavians Coins*, in: A.J. Boyle and W.J. Dominik. *Flavian Rome: Culture, Image, Text*. Brill, Leiden/Boston, pp. 103-124.

²⁵ *BMCRE Vesp.* 83-85, 510-1, 518, 532-47, 604-7, 609, 631-2, 761-5, 800, 812; *RIC 2^d Vesp.* 167-9, 363, 368-9, 422, 1134, 1181, 1204, 1558, 1562; Carson 1978b, 36 (no. 477).

defeat of Judaea. The image of this general is a mirror image of Virtus on Vespasian's Honos and Virtus coin (**Fig. 118**). This military general, whether he represents Vespasian or Titus, doubtless adopted the iconography of Virtus. The *virtus* of the Flavians not only yielded a victory and a triumph over Judaea, but also a new era of peace – a *pax Flavia*, celebrated by Vespasian's consecration of his Temple of Peace in 75. His *virtus*, however, was still publicly celebrated by the people of Rome with a spectacular triumph, during which not a soul was left at home, according to Josephus.²⁶

When Titus returned to Rome in 71, he shared a triumph with his father, even though the senate decreed a separate triumph for each. The morning of the triumph, the Flavians, crowned with laurel and clad in the purple, left the Palatine Hill at the break of dawn and headed for the Porticus Octaviae, where they were greeted by the senate, chief magistrates, and the *equites*. From there, they made their way to the Porta Triumphalis; and, having dressed in triumphal garb, Vespasian and Titus mounted their chariot, with Domitian following on horseback. The three passed under the Porta Triumphalis, commencing the triumphal procession that publicly testified to the martial valor of the Flavians – the *virtus Flavia*.²⁷



Figure 121: Aureus of Vespasian featuring a triumphal procession. 71 CE.

This moment was captured by the moneyers at the mint in Lugdunum in 71, who struck a series of aurei illustrating the triumph of Vespasian on the reverse (**Fig. 121**).²⁸ The legend in the exergue sets the scene: *TRIVMP AVG*. Vespasian (or, perhaps, Titus), bearing a laurel branch, rides in the car of his triumphal chariot. Victoria stands with him in the car and crowns him with laurel. Above the horses stands a *tubicen*, announcing the *adventus* of the emperor. The figure at the far right is a bearded Judaeian captive. His hands are bound behind his

²⁶ Jos. BJ 7.5.3.

²⁷ Jos. BJ 7.5.3-5; Dio 65.12; Suet. Dom. 2.

²⁸ BMCRE Vesp. 397; RIC 2² Vesp. 1127.

back. The figure in between the triumphal quadriga and the fettered captive carries a spear in the right hand and turns around to engage visually with the *triumphator*. Mattingly has interpreted this figure to be a soldier.²⁹ However, the figure appears to have a pronounced bosom and wears a short tunic. Moreover, the composition is so similar to the Triumph Relief from the Medinaceli group that the figure on the aureus ought to be identified as Virtus (**Figs. 49, 50**). As the divine herald of the emperor in victory scenes, Virtus leads the imperial quadriga through triumph as she gazes back upon the emperor, visually associating the emperor with his *virtus Augusti*, without which his enemies would not have been captured and his victory would not have been possible.

IV.II: The Arch of Titus

Ten years later, Titus unexpectedly died, leaving the empire in the hands of the youngest Flavian, Domitian. In 81, Domitian completed an honorific arch in his brother's name, decorated in relief sculpture that would memorialize his brother's greatest military accomplishment, the triumph over Judaea – the supreme martial feat that would immortalize him.³⁰ Titus' victory could not have been achieved without his capacity in martial excellence, his *virtus*, gifted by the goddess who made his victory over Judaea possible: Virtus. On the walls of the bay of the Arch of Titus, Domitian commissioned two pendant panels, the sculptural program of which commemorates Titus' triumph celebrated in 71. The south panel represents the procession of the *spolia*, taken from the Second Temple in Jerusalem, including the temple's Menorah, placed on a *ferculum*. Also represented are several *pinakes* that must have once been painted with representations of the war.³¹ The north panel depicts Titus' triumph (**Fig. 122**).

The triumph is not exactly historical, but rather myth-historical, illustrating an idealized version of the triumph in 71 in which the gods participate. The focus of the so-called Triumphator Relief is Titus, who

²⁹ Mattingly 1930, 81.

³⁰ For the dating of the Arch of Titus, see Pfanner 1982, 91-2.

³¹ Jos. *JW* 7.5.5; For an in-depth analysis on Josephus' account of the triumph, see Beard, M. 2003. *The Triumph of Flavius Josephus*, in: A.J Boyle and W.J. Dominik. *Flavian Rome: Culture, Image, Text*. Brill, Leiden/Boston, pp. 543-558.



Figure 122: Arch of Titus: Triumphator Relief. Ca. 81 CE.

rides in the car of his triumphal quadriga, carrying a scepter in his left hand and a palm branch in his right. Standing with Titus is the winged goddess Victoria, who crowns Titus with either the *corona triumphalis* or a wreath of laurel to signify his victory over Judaea. In the background is a procession of 12 lictors. The Amazon goddess who leads the emperor's triumphal quadriga is none other than Virtus, who pulls the reins of the quadriga with her left hand. Her identification is corroborated by the Triumph Relief of the Medinaceli Reliefs, in which Virtus pulls the reins of Augustus' quadriga during his triumph and, again, on the Tensa Relief, in which she guides the emperor's *tensa*. During the reign of Augustus, the goddess Virtus became an animated divinity whose job it was to guide the emperor as divine herald through scenes of victory. Therefore, there remains no doubt that the identity of this Amazon goddess on the Arch of Titus is Virtus.³² Virtus advances toward the left, but turns her head to the right in order to engage with her *triumphator*. This is similar to the way in which Virtus on the Triumph Relief of the Medinaceli group

³² First identified as Virtus by Purgold, K. 1868. *Archaeologische Bemerkungen zu Claudian und Sidonius*, pp. 30f.; Bieber (1945, 27-30) re-identifies her as Virtus in her article on Honos and Virtus; Pfanner (1983, 67-8) made a strong argument for Virtus, as opposed to Roma, in his monograph on the Arch of Titus; however, he did not know of the Medinaceli Reliefs, which would have validated his claim. Cf. also Milhous (1992, 255-260) for an exhaustive bibliography on the Arch of Titus; Kähler 1960, 253; Hannestad 1986, 128-9; De Maria 1988, 120-1; Koeppel 1989, 25-6, 49-52; Hölscher 2009, 51-2; *contra* Brilliant (1963, 94) and Kleiner (1992, 188), who identify her as Roma.

deliberately makes eye-contact with Augustus, symbolizing Virtus' endorsement of the emperor's victory. The Virtus on the Arch of Titus once wore an Attic helmet with a crest, likely buttressed by a reclining sphinx, although the crest no longer survives; however, parts of the crest and plume can still be detected. Her hair is long and cascades onto her shoulders. Her right arm is now missing, however, she once carried a spear, whose upper shaft and tip can still be seen above and to the left of her head. Unfortunately, her body is heavily eroded, but her right shoulder is bare, attesting to the fact that her tunic denuded her right breast. Her garment ends just above the knees, signifying that she wore her canonical short Amazonian tunic. A mantle drapes behind her left shoulder and falls to her hip. And on her feet, she wears a pair of pelt boots.

Virtus is not the only divinity on the Triumphator Relief. She is joined not only by Victoria, who has been paired with Virtus since the coinage of Galba, but also by her original ideological partner Honos. Honos stands next to Titus' car just behind the horses. Unfortunately, his head, left arm, and right hand are missing; however, the identification of Honos is ascertained from the fact that the Genius Populi Romani and Roma are never paired together, as well as by the Tensa Relief from the Medinaceli group, which depicts Honos and Virtus leading the *tensa* of Augustus together through the procession.³³ And the pairing of Honos and Virtus on the Arch of Titus may also allude to the fact that the Temple of Honos and Virtus at the Porta Capena was restored during the Flavian dynasty. Honos is semi-nude, draped only around the waist and left shoulder. He most probably carried a cornucopia in his left hand. His right hand, in which he likely held one of his attributes, is stretched out above the horses. Milhous proposes that he may have held a laurel branch. Milhous also points out that the images of Honos and Virtus on the Arch of Titus conform to the images of Honos and Virtus on the Honos and Virtus series of coins struck by

³³ Pfanner (1983, 49, 68-9) makes a strong claim for the identification of the youth as Honos; and, he is correct in stating that Roma and the Genius Populi Romani are never paired in Roman art. Hannestad (1986, 128-9) identifies the Amazon as Virtus but Honos as the Genius Populi Romani, because he believes that the male standing next to Honos is the Genius Senatus, but it is not; Kleiner (1992, 188) erroneously identifies the pair as Roma and the Genius Populi Romani; cf. also De Maria 1988, 120-1; Koeppl 1989, 25-6, 49-52; Milhous 1992, 255-260; Hölscher 2009, 52.

Vespasian, likely minted to commemorate his restoration of the Temple of Honos and Virtus at the Porta Capena.³⁴ Together, Honos and Virtus frame the triumphal quadriga of the emperor, underscoring the virtues that guide him to political and military success as emperor of Rome.³⁵



Figure 123: Arch of Titus: keystone featuring Virtus. Ca. 81 CE.



Figure 124: Arch of Titus: keystone featuring Honos. Ca. 81 CE.

These are not the only images of Honos and Virtus on the Arch of Titus, however. Honos and Virtus are also represented on the keystones of the arch.³⁶ The eastern keystone depicts Virtus (**Fig. 123**). Unfortunately, her head, arms, and hands no longer survive; however, the remains of her image are congruous with the iconography of Virtus, not only the Virtus on the Triumphator Relief, but also the Virtus on the issues of the Honos and Virtus coins minted by Vespasian in 71, as well as the fact that Roma is never paired with Honos or the Genius Populi Romani. Moreover, the fact that Vespasian restored the Temple of Honos and Virtus lends credence to this identification. Virtus poses in a *Standmotiv* and wears a double-belted Amazonian tunic that exposes her right breast, as well as a mantle bunched on her left

³⁴ Milhous 1992, 257.

³⁵ The togate male standing behind Honos has sometimes been referred to as the Genius Senatus; however, Pfanner (1983, 50, 70-1) has repudiated this hypothesis. He notes that the musculature of the neck, his short hair, and his slim build renders this figure too youthful in appearance to have represented an aged Genius Senatus. Furthermore, the Genius Senatus always carries an attribute such as a scepter or rotulus or wears a ring on his finger as he does on the Cancelleria Reliefs; however, this figure does not possess any attribute of the Genius Senatus.

³⁶ Pfanner 1983, 81-2; Bieber 1945, 34; Milhous 1992, 259-60, 346; *Contra* Kleiner (1985, 83), who identifies them as the Genius Populi Romani and Roma.

shoulder. Her knees and lower legs are exposed down to her lion-pelt boots. She also wears a balteus slung from her right shoulder that must have supported her *parazonium*.³⁷ The western keystone depicts Honos, whose iconography replicates the image of Honos on the Triumph Panel and on Vespasian's Honos and Virtus coin (**Fig. 124**). Honos is semi-nude, draped around the waist and over his left shoulder. Unfortunately, his head and right arm are missing, but he carries a rather large cornucopia in the crook of his left arm. Together, Honos and Virtus on the keystones of the arch exemplify the reasons for which the Arch of Titus was constructed and dedicated to Titus by Domitian, namely the political and military accomplishments of the former emperor, which maintained the foundations of the Flavian dynasty upon which Domitian could continue to build his family's legacy.

Titus' *honor* was confirmed when he became emperor in 79, following the political path of his father. On the other hand, his *virtus* was cultivated over his entire military career from the time he became tribune of the military both in Gaul and in Britain to the time he was hailed as *imperator* by his troops after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70. The *virtus* of Titus is recognized by his younger brother Domitian, who acknowledged a Julio-Claudian precedent, and accorded the ideological importance of Virtus' image to Titus' foreign accomplishments. Just as Virtus appeared on the Medinaceli Reliefs during Augustus' victory over Illyricum, Actium, and Egypt, so too does Virtus reappear on the Arch of Titus, commemorating Titus' triumph over Judaea, over a foreign and barbarous people.

Foreign victory is a product of *virtus*, without which the emperor would not have been able to defeat his foreign enemies. It is now transparent from the Triumph Relief of the Medinaceli group and from the Triumphator Relief of the Arch of Titus that, after the emperor claims victory over a foreign country, the goddess Virtus makes her debut appearance. It is only after the emperor achieves victory

³⁷ Milhous (1992, 260) notes that the Victoria in spandrel to the left of Virtus seeming to be carrying a *vexillum* to Virtus, which, as Pfanner (1983, 81) states, was an appropriate instrument of war. The *vexillum* could also be a nod to the *virtus exercitus*, or the *virtus* of the military, since Virtus is known to have carried the *vexillum*, e.g. the Budapest Virtus and the Vatican Virtus.

that her image is displayed on victory monuments that commemorate the emperor's victory in a foreign war. She not only represents the hallmark of military glory of the emperor, but also the acquisition of *virtus* from the emperor's conquest of a barbarian nation – now devoid of its *virtus*. When a contest in *virtus* took place on the battlefield, only one side could win; and it is this side with which the Amazon goddess sided. The relief on the Arch of Titus represents the Amazon goddess' choice of side. Having abandoned a foreign nation dispossessed of its *virtus*, the goddess joins the winning side, the side of the Romans, and, more specifically, the side of the Roman emperor, who earned her gift on the battlefield. The Romans chose to represent *Virtus* not only as a *spolium* gained in warfare, but also as a deity of her own free will, having chosen to associate herself exclusively with the emperor of Rome. Her image as herald of the emperor was conceptualized by the Romans in order to symbolize that she resides solely with the emperor of Rome as the *Virtus Augusti*.



Figure 125: Arch of Titus: Soffit relief depicting the Apotheosis of Titus. Ca. 81 CE.

The Triumphator Relief is ideologically associated with one other relief on the Arch of Titus: the Apotheosis of Titus, in which Titus flies to heaven on the back of Jupiter's eagle as he becomes a god, appropriately placed in the center of the arch's soffit to underscore his ascension (**Fig. 125**). The deification of Titus by his brother Domitian is made

clear by the dedicatory inscription: "the senate and the Roman people [dedicated this monument] to the divine Titus Vespasian Augustus, son of the divine Vespasian."³⁸ The position of this relief on the keystone of the vault illuminates the programmatic cycle of the arch's reliefs, namely that apotheosis is achieved through one's martial exploits. That is to say Titus' apotheosis was supported by the pillars of his success

³⁸ *SENATVS POPVLVSQVE ROMANVS DIVO TITO DIVI VESPASIANI F[ILIO] VESPASIANO AVGVSTO.*

in a foreign war and of the glory of receiving a triumph predicated on the emperor's *virtus Augusti*, his martial excellence, as commander-in-chief of Rome.³⁹ Virtus may only be given the illusion of guiding Titus in triumph, but his final destination was his passage to heaven during his apotheosis, made possible by the goddess that carried his legacy through Rome. Virtus not only delivered Titus a triumph of his martial legacy, but also a triumph over death. Just as Statius stated (discussed above), the goddess Virtus does the bidding of Jupiter and guides those whom she chooses to the stars.⁴⁰ Moreover, the visibility of Virtus cannot be missed as one walked alongside her through the vault of the arch and joined the glory of Titus' military celebration. The presence of her image still maintains the Roman idea that it was necessary for *virtus* to be publicly recognized in order to legitimize not only Titus' martial achievements during his principate and the apotheosis to which Virtus guided him, but also his authority to rule. Vespasian and Titus, through their *virtus*, ushered in a new era of peace in the 70s; and, because their martial accomplishments were validated, and peace procured, both Vespasian and Titus reaped the ultimate reward of *virtus Augusti*: immortality.

IV.III: The Vatican Relief

The Triumphator Relief of the Arch of Titus is not the only surviving triumphal relief featuring the goddess Virtus from the Flavian period.⁴¹ In the Cortile del Belvedere of the Vatican Museums rests a fragmentary relief of a Roman triumphal procession led by Virtus who is escorted by an entourage of *fascies*-bearing, laureate lictors (**Fig. 126**). Unfortunately, the



Figure 126: The Vatican Relief: Virtus guides the emperor during a triumph. Ca. Flavian period.

³⁹ Cf. also De Maria (1988, 120) and Mihous (1992, 259) who also associate *virtus* with the apotheosis of Titus.

⁴⁰ Stat. *Theb.* 10.632-8. Cf. also Ch. III.C.

⁴¹ The dating is based on style and composition, cf. Wace 1905, 282-3; Hölscher 2009, 53.

relief has been heavily restored; however, the context and setting are clear: a Roman triumph.⁴² The *triumphator* (now lost) is led through his victory parade by Virtus, whose visual role it was to guide the victorious emperor to his final destination. This composition is analogous to the way in which Virtus leads Augustus' triumphal procession on the Medinaceli Reliefs and Titus' on the Arch of Titus, thereby confirming the identity of the goddess as Virtus and not as Roma.⁴³ This also lends credence to a Domitianic date. As herald of the emperor, Virtus advances to the left. She turns her face back to the right in order to visually engage with the *triumphator*, who rides in his triumphal car pulled by four horses. Virtus is dressed in a double belted tunic that covers her breasts, albeit her chest has been restored, leaving only the probability that her right breast was originally exposed. She also wears a heavy *paludamentum* that is clasped at the right shoulder with a *fibula* and drapes across her chest, back, and left arm. Because the *paludamentum* is reserved for the emperor, it can be surmised that Virtus is projecting elements of the emperor, and, therefore, she is to be understood as the Virtus Augusti. Virtus originally wore a crested helmet, much of which has been restored; however, parts of the crest are original. Her right arm has been restored, therefore, the attribute held in her right hand is unknown. Diverging from the standard iconography of Virtus, the goddess carries a *vexillum* in her left hand, of which part of the banner is original, in lieu of the reins of the quadriga, or a *parazonium*, or spear. The *vexillum* is not an unprecedented attribute of Virtus, however. The Virtus depicted on the Great Jupiter Column in Mainz and on the relief from Budapest also carries a *vexillum*.

Whoever the *triumphator* was will forever remain a mystery, as well as the provenance of the relief, save that it derives from a monument in Rome, very likely triumphal in nature. However, it was likely a part of a larger triumphal panel representing the triumph of Titus in 71, or, more likely, the triumph of Domitian in 83, in my opinion. The relief, albeit fragmentary, establishes an important precedent for

⁴² For the restoration, see Wace 1905, 282-3; Amelung 1903-1908, 247-49; Milhous 1992, 268-270.

⁴³ *Contra* Koeppel (1984, 3-4, 22-3), Wace (1905, 282-3), and Amelung (1903-1908, 247-49), who identify the goddess as Roma.

the iconography of the goddess Virtus and her role as herald of the emperor, namely that her appointment as the holder of reins is evolving. Virtus has become detached from the quadriga which she once pulled through triumph as she does on the Medinaceli Reliefs and on the Arch of Titus. From the Domitianic period onward, Virtus is no longer bound to the triumphal quadriga. Virtus will now be assigned to divergent roles in various visual narratives illustrating the emperors' victories; and, she will carry a combination of disparate military attributes. One aspect of her iconography, however, remains the same: she will continue to guide the emperor in victory scenes and represent his *virtus* as the Virtus Augusti.

IV.IV: VIRTUTI AVGVSTI: The Virtus of Domitian

If there were any one man who was more conscious of the political advantage of *virtus* and of the power of its martial image in ancient Rome, it was Domitian. Domitian was obsessed with his self-image as a great military leader, in which lay his only interest: self-preservation. He proactively manipulated his audience to believe, even from the very beginning of his reign, that he was a man of unequivocal martial success, a man of *virtus*. His attempts to eclipse the military renown of his father and brother were not obscure; they were shameless. He sought to achieve *virtus* for himself by any means. He minted more coins illustrating the goddess Virtus than any other general or emperor before him, and created his own proprietary image of Virtus, accompanied by the legend that defined his devotion to *virtus* and its goddess: *VIRTUTI AVGVSTI*, "to/for Virtus Augusti." Moreover, many state reliefs survive from the Domitianic principate, several of which emphasize the importance of *virtus* in victory compositions, including the Triumphator Relief from the Arch of Titus, the Vatican Relief, Frieze A of the Cancelleria Reliefs, a similar relief from Anacapri, and the Nollekens Relief. However, Domitian did not cultivate his fervor for *virtus* in a vacuum; he began to cultivate it as a boy. Surviving in the shadows of his father and brother, whose popularity and success were predicated on their martial excellence – their *virtus* – Domitian inherited the desire for glory; and *virtus*, which became the *leitmotif* of Domitian's legacy, was going to provide that opportunity for him, no matter the cost.

In the new year of 70 CE, Domitian was the most important man in Rome. Vitellius was just assassinated in December of 69 by Flavian sympathizers, and Domitian, having barely escaped with his life from a Vitellian incursion on the Capitoline Hill, presented himself to the Flavian forces, which hailed Domitian as *Caesar* at the age of 18. His harrowing escape from death was the subject of a relief he commissioned for the altar in his new Temple of Jupiter Custos built on the Capitoline, testifying to Domitian's inclination for recording his actions in stone.⁴⁴ On the 1st of January, while Vespasian and Titus were still on campaign in the east, Domitian was appointed praetor with consular power and represented his family in the senate.⁴⁵ From the beginning of his temporary reign in Rome, Domitian was eager for military glory. Jones recognized Domitian's martial ambition in stating that, "any member of the elite, at the age of 18 at least, believed that military glory surpassed everything else, for the entire world obeyed Rome because of that very quality; and his enthusiasm [for military glory] would have been enhanced by the fact that his father, uncle, brother and four other male relatives had personally led a legion."⁴⁶ Following in his father's and brother's footsteps toward establishing his own martial renown and inheriting his father's martial bravery (*ἀνδραγαθίαν*), according to Josephus, Domitian deployed on an expedition to Germany, where turmoil erupted among the Batavian auxiliary forces (a part of the Chatti peoples), according to Tacitus, in the early months of the year 70.⁴⁷ Suetonius asserts that Domitian's military actions were unnecessary, waging war only for the sake of making himself equal to his brother's power (*opibus*) and repute (*dignatione*).⁴⁸ On his march north with the forces of seven legions to pacify the barbarian auxiliaries, the Batavian threat had just as quickly dissipated and Domitian's armies were no longer needed, obstructing him from displaying *virtus* that would have afforded him martial glory.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Tac. *Hist.* 3.74, 86; Jones 1992, 14. Cf. also Sil. Ital. *Pun.* 3.60-10, who recalls the destruction of the Capitoline by the Vitellians from whom Domitian escaped.

⁴⁵ Tac. *Hist.* 4.39-40; Suet. *Dom.* 1.

⁴⁶ Jones (1992, 16) cites Cicero *Pro Murena* 22, already discussed above in Chapter I. For the list of relatives, see Jones 1992, 201, no. 53.

⁴⁷ Jos. *BJ* 7.4.2; Tac. *Hist.* 4.12, 68; Suet. *Dom.* 2; Jones 1992, 16.

⁴⁸ Suet. *Dom.* 2.

⁴⁹ On the Roman campaigns against the Batavians, cf. Tac. *Hist.* 4.12-37. 54-79, 5.14-26.

Nevertheless, that Domitian desired to distinguish himself in military renown to contend for a comparable, if not greater, martial reputation and rank than his father and his brother is transparent. Subsequently, Domitian returned to Rome and returned to the shadow of Titus until his death in 81, when Domitian could try for *virtus* once again. In the meantime, Domitian was granted six consulships under Vespasian's regime, although only one was a *consulatus ordinarius* in 73, at the behest of Titus, who endorsed Domitian with a letter of recommendation.⁵⁰ And under Titus, he was elected *consul ordinarius* for the second time in 80.⁵¹ However, the honor of achieving rank on the *cursus honorum* and cultivating his political career was not enough for Domitian. An ardent warmonger was growing from within.

As the newly acclaimed emperor of Rome in 81, Domitian's first deed was to construct the Arch of Titus to magnify the martial glory of his brother's military exploits and as a physical analogue to Titus' reward for his reputation in *virtus*: immortality. In erecting the honorific arch in the first year of his reign, Domitian attempted to validate his regime by associating himself with the political and martial success of the Flavian dynasty for the past 11 years. This political ruse would afford him the opportunity to undertake any military action with the help of the legions loyal to the Flavian name that would benefit his personal quest for *virtus*. Thus, it seems as though the ideological connection between Domitian's building program and Titus' reputation was recognized, since Domitian did, initially, possess the credibility with the legions needed to facilitate his pursuit of *virtus* that commenced shortly after his accession to the throne.

Because of his insatiable lust for glory in warfare, Domitian spent a great deal of time outside of Rome on personal military expeditions, many of which were needless, benefitting no one but himself.⁵² According to Suetonius, Domitian "undertook military expeditions; some were necessary, but the rest were utterly excessive."⁵³ Taking his brother's advice, who once said that "rapidity was essential to

⁵⁰ *CIL* 6.1877; Suet. *Dom.* 2; Southern 1997, 26.

⁵¹ *CIL* 2.4803 = *ILS* 5833; Southern 1997, 26.

⁵² Jones 1992, 126-7.

⁵³ Suet. *Dom.* 6: *Expeditiones partim sponte suscepit, partim necessario.*

military renown,” Domitian incited conflict in Gaul and Germany to satisfy his ardor for military prestige, which, to him, must have seemed to be the natural order of the Roman principate, given his father’s foreign exploits that prefaced his sovereignty.⁵⁴ His unsuccessful attempt to wage war against the Batavians on the Rhine in 70 did not discourage him from attempting to amplify his martial status after his accession in 81. His thwarted ambitions only served to magnify his envy for the same military respect which his brother and father had garnered with the people of Rome. Therefore, in 83, Domitian returned to the Rhine to try again. Giving the public a false impression that he was present only to take a simple census, he became aggressive toward the Chatti people, among whom belonged the Batavians. This was an unprovoked hostility, according to Suetonius. Domitian began overhauling their lands and constructing a network of roads. This enabled him to expand the frontier and to take control of some of the main thoroughfares adopted by these native tribes, which were advancing towards the Rhine from the north and east.⁵⁵ Sometime in 83, a war against the Chatti erupted, which, ultimately, resulted in a victory for Domitian, although there is little mention of battle discussed by the ancient historians.⁵⁶ Dio states that the war was concluded without Domitian ever setting his eyes on battle.⁵⁷ However, Frontinus, who participated in the war as a general of Domitian, records that Domitian was present during battle where he both commanded and praised his forces.⁵⁸ And Domitian was cognizant of the fact that *virtus* can only be obtained in the theater of war, just as Vespasian and Titus were present on the battlefield. Thus, it is credible to assume that Domitian was, indeed, present during battle even if he did not directly engage in combat. And, perhaps, the probability that Domitian was not risking his life on the frontline diminished his military standing with the historians. In any case, a great victory was claimed and proclaimed, despite

⁵⁴ Jos. *BJ* 5.12.1; Jones 1992, 16.

⁵⁵ Front. *Strat.* 1.1.8; Suet. *Dom.* 6.; Dio 58.3-4; Tac. *Hist.* 4.12; Murison 1988, 221-2; Jones 1992, 127-8; Southern 1997, 80.

⁵⁶ For the war, see Southern 1997, 79-91.

⁵⁷ Dio 67.4; Southern 1997, 147, no. 4.

⁵⁸ Front. *Strat.* 2.3.23; Murison 1988, 224.



Figure 127: Denarius of Domitian featuring Germania, a German prisoner, and a trophy. 84 CE.

the fact that the credibility of that victory was repudiated by the ancient historians.⁵⁹ Tacitus even criticizes Domitian in stating that the Germans were more triumphed over than they were conquered.⁶⁰

Regardless of the people's reception of Domitian's war against the Chatti, he returned to Rome and claimed a triumph for himself over Germany and, subsequently, ensured that all were aware of his victory by claiming the title *Germanicus*, "conqueror of Germany," for himself,

emblazoned on imperial issues of coins beginning in 83 and lasting throughout his principate.⁶¹ In response to his father's IVDAEA CAPTA series of coins, beginning in 84, Domitian struck a GERMANIA CAPTA series, which similarly features a mourning female personification of Germania sitting beneath a towering Roman trophy, comprising two oblong shields and a horned helmet (**Fig. 127**).⁶² Standing right is a male German captive, his hands bound behind his back. He turns his head behind him and is made to gaze upon his



Figure 128: Denarius of Domitian featuring Virtus on the reverse. 84 CE.

armor that once exemplified his *virtus*. However, the physical remains of his *virtus* which formerly belonged to him now belong to Domitian.

Domitian's victory over the Germans and the triumph he claimed for himself also granted him license to claim *virtus*, regardless of the fact that he was loathed and his *virtus* may not have been earned or even officially recognized by the people. Nevertheless, immediately after his self-proclaimed victory over Germany, Domitian began minting his first

issues of Virtus coins, beginning in 84 and persisting until the end of his reign in 96 (**Fig. 128**).⁶³ The

⁵⁹ Suet. *Dom.* 6; Dio 67.4; Tac. *Agric.* 39; Plin. *Pan.* 16.3.

⁶⁰ Tac. *Germ.* 37; Jones 1992, 130.

⁶¹ Suet. *Dom.* 13; Front. *Strat.* 1.1.8, 2.3.23, 2.11.7; Tac. *Agric.* 39; *Germ.* 37; Jones 1992, 129; Murison 1988, 224.

⁶² *BMCRE DOM.* 294, 325-6, 361, 372; *RIC 2² Dom.* 274, 351, 397, 463, 525, 632.

⁶³ *BMCRE Dom.* 287b; 313; 352A; 367b; 384, 393-4, 397c, 404-5, 413-4, 417, 438d; 446-7, 452, 468, 470b, 479, 480; *RIC 2² Dom.* 299, 300, 374, 390, 423, 484, 499, 500, 540-1, 550-1, 631, 644, 645, 650, 706, 709, 754, 757, 804, 810.

iconography of Virtus in all of Domitian's issues remains consistent, even in attributes.⁶⁴ Virtus is positioned in a *Standmotiv* with her weight shifted on her right leg and her left leg placed on a helmet, symbolizing the defeat of an enemy.⁶⁵ She dons a crested helmet atop her head and her long hair underneath falls to her shoulders. In her right hand, she wields a reverse spear; and in her left arm, she cradles a *parazonium*. Her dress is partially unconventional. She wears a long chiton, belted at the waist, as well as a mantle that drapes over her left arm. Her chiton exposes her right breast and drapes below the knees; however, only one side of the chiton covers her right leg, whereas her left leg is exposed mid-thigh, revealing her military boots. This appears to be the iconography of Virtus as a statue, as opposed to the iconography of Virtus as an animated participant in victory scenes. Because this numismatic Virtus represents a statue, it should be considered that the image was modeled on a known statue of Virtus in Rome, perhaps one from one of the three sacred spaces of Virtus in Rome, or, more likely, a personal statue of Virtus commissioned by Domitian. In any case, this idiosyncratic likeness of Virtus belongs solely to Domitian. Moreover, the legend that attests her identity as Virtus, *VIRTVTI AVGVSTI SC*, is in the dative case rather than the nominative, indicating a dedication rather than a designation: "to/for Virtus Augusti." Domitian addresses the goddess Virtus directly, signifying that a relationship between the goddess and the emperor has been established. The legend of his Virtus coins is likely a thank-offering to the goddess who conferred her gift upon him that resulted in his victory over the Germans.

Not only did Domitian strike Virtus coins to symbolize his *virtus* gained from subjugating the Chatti, but he also struck coins bearing the image of himself in the pose of Virtus, just as Galba represented himself in the pose of Virtus on some issues of his coins and as Vespasian (or Titus) represented himself in the pose of Virtus on several of the *Judaea Capta* issues. On the reverse of a series of sestertii struck beginning in 85, Domitian, dressed in a cuirass, tunic, and *paludamentum*, assumes the formulaic position

⁶⁴ Virtus faces left rather than right in the earliest issues minted in 84/5.

⁶⁵ Milhous (1992, 142) claims that Virtus sometimes positions her foot on a globe; however, she has mistaken the shape of the helmet for a globe.



Figure 129: Sestertius of Domitian featuring Domitian and the Rhine on the reverse. 85 CE.

of Virtus in a *Standmotiv*; however, rather than placing his foot on the enemy's armor, he subordinates the personification of the Rhine with his right foot, allegorizing the conquest of Germany (Fig. 129).⁶⁶ He wields a reverse spear in his left hand and he cradles a *parazonium* in the crook of his right arm. Domitian evokes Virtus in this series as he literally mirrors the iconography of his proprietary Virtus above. The series demonstrates not only the indivisible relationship Domitian

forged with the goddess since his first victory against a barbarian peoples, but also that he acquired the *virtus* (which derived from victory on the Rhine) he needed to advance his political agenda toward military glory.

However, the Chatti were not officially conquered, since they continued to cause interference along the Rhine and rejected the authority of Domitian.⁶⁷ The public ridicule of Domitian's victory about which he boasted appears to have vexed him, making him reconsider the repute of his triumph. According to Tacitus, "[Domitian's] conscience felt that his recent triumph, albeit unwarranted, over Germany had made a mockery of him."⁶⁸ Both Tacitus and Pliny the Younger call his triumph and victories in Germany phony (*falsum* and *falsae*, respectively); and a mutual sentiment must have reverberated across Rome at the time.⁶⁹ Domitian may have also considered his military victory over only one foreign peoples inadequate and insufficient to transcend the martial accomplishments of his father and brother. In any case, between 85 and 89, Domitian returned to war to try his hand at *virtus* one more time.

The ancient authors make it clear that Domitian's war against the Chatti was superficial, and that his celebrated triumph bore him little more glory than he had had before the war. However, Suetonius

⁶⁶ *BMCRE Dom.* 334-6, 362c, 408; *RIC 2² Dom.* 278, 356, 400, 468, 528, 636.

⁶⁷ Jones 1992, 131, 144, 150.

⁶⁸ Tac. *Agric.* 39.2: *Inerat conscientia derisui fuisse nuper falsum e Germania triumphum, emptis per commercia.*

⁶⁹ Tac. *Agric.* 39.2; Plin. *Pan.* 16.3.

acknowledges that the war against the Sarmatians was waged out of necessity, presenting Domitian with yet another opportunity to receive respectable military honors and to validate his *virtus*.⁷⁰ The tribes that settled along the Danube were conspiring to unite their forces against Domitian, who had the desire to connect his western territories with his eastern allies. These tribes were the Sarmatians (comprised of the Iazyges and the Roxolani), the Suebi (the Marcomanni and the Quadi, who inhabited the area north of Pannonia) and the Dacians, who were considered the most formidable enemies of Domitian.⁷¹ Domitian was aware that if and when he conquered any or all of these barbarian tribes, their defeat would bring him a reputation in military honors and a proper Roman triumph. Sometime in 85, the Dacians traversed the Danube and infiltrated Moesia, where the Roman governor Oppius Sabinus was killed and several towns and military posts were destroyed.⁷² A reason for the precipitate invasion of Moesia is not addressed in the literary sources. However, Southern posits that the Dacians may have become unsettled over Domitian's aggressive war against the Chatti, fearing that they themselves were in danger of Roman conquest; and, for this, they preemptively attacked in a demonstration of strength.⁷³ Domitian hurried with his praetorian prefect Cornelius Fuscus to the scene, where he gained some initial success, forcing the Dacians out of Moesia and back across the Danube, likely with little combat.⁷⁴ Having left Fuscus in charge of the front, Domitian returned to Rome in 86, where he celebrated his second triumph, this time over the Dacians, and accepted his twelfth acclamation as *imperator*, testifying to Domitian's impatience for martial esteem, even though this triumph was ostensibly less deserved than his triumph over the Chatti.⁷⁵ While Domitian was celebrating in Rome, Fuscus attempted to invade Dacia, but to no avail. He

⁷⁰ Suet. *Dom.* 6.

⁷¹ Jones 1992, 129.

⁷² Suet. *Dom.* 6; Dio 7.6; Murison 1988, 229-44; Jones 1992, 138; Southern 1997, 92.

⁷³ Southern 1997, 92; cf. also Murison (1988, 230) for a similar sentiment.

⁷⁴ Jones 1992, 138; Southern 1992, 92.

⁷⁵ Suet. *Dom.* 6.2; 13.3; Jones 1992, 139; Southern 1997, 98.

and a great number of troops were annihilated and the Roman standards of the praetorian guard were confiscated.⁷⁶ Domitian bided his time in Rome before returning to the front to pursue vengeance.

In 89, the governor of Upper Germany, Saturninus, revolted against Domitian, having recruited the Chatti to his cause.⁷⁷ Moreover, hostilities began to ensue among the Suebi at the time that Domitian was preparing to continue his war against Dacia. Two wars on his doorstep was one too many, thus, he quickly returned to the Danube to negotiate an armistice with Dacia. And for his diplomatic victory, Domitian was awarded an equestrian statue in Rome, decreed by the senate.⁷⁸ Moreover, Domitian had already celebrated a triumph over Dacia in 86; therefore, there was no need to go to war with a repeat offender that would not produce another unique triumph for him. Pannonia, on the other hand, had never been triumphed over by the Romans, thereby, once again, opening the gates of glory through which Domitian could enter. With affairs settled in Dacia, Domitian turned his attention toward Pannonia and the marauding Suebi (Marcomanni and the Quadi tribes).

According to Dio, Domitian entered Pannonia and attacked the Suebi, initiating the First Pannonian War. He justified his attack by claiming that the Suebi did not voluntarily send assistance in their war against Dacia. The Suebi sued for peace; however, Domitian rejected their offer and sentenced the Suebian envoys to death.⁷⁹ Domitian's aggression toward the Suebi is indicative of his intentions, namely that Pannonia was projected to be conquered and subjugated by him regardless of the tribes' petition for peace. Details of the fighting and of the conclusion of the war are absent from the literary sources; however, Dio states that the Marcomanni defeated Domitian's forces, pressuring him to settle for a temporary armistice, until a later time.⁸⁰ By November of 89, Domitian returned to Rome and

⁷⁶ Dio 67.6; 68.9; Tac. *Hist.* 2.86; Tac. *Agric.* 41; Jones 1992, 138, 141; Southern 1997, 92; Murison 1988, 233.

⁷⁷ Jones 1992, 144-9; Bennett 1997, 29-30.

⁷⁸ Stat. *Silv.* 1.1.1; Jones 1992, 150-1; Southern 1997, 99, 106; Murison 1988, 235.

⁷⁹ Dio 67.7; Jones 1992, 151; Murison 1988, 234; Southern 1997, 107.

⁸⁰ Dio 67.7; Jones 1992, 151; Murison 1988, 234-5.

celebrated a double triumph over the Chatti (allies of Saturninus) and the Dacians, making this his third triumph, even though no foreign peoples were conquered or subjugated as he had planned.⁸¹

In the early part of the year 90, Domitian began consolidating his forces in his attempt to complete his unnecessary war waged against the Suebi.⁸² In May of 92, the Sarmatians allied with the Suebi during an attempt to resist the invading Romans. Domitian led an expedition through Dacia and attacked the Sarmatian Iazyges tribe, initiating the Second Pannonian War. What ensued during this campaign is speculative, for little is known about the details of this war. However, the campaign appears to have lasted around eight months; for, by January of 93, Domitian had already returned to Rome from the front and, possibly, installed Trajan as governor of Pannonia for the time being, implying that he may have participated in Domitian's Pannonian campaign in 92.⁸³ Domitian seems to have procured some military acclaim from the outcome of war; for, even though he rejected a *triumphus iustus*, he claimed an *ovatio* for his Pannonian campaign, likely surrendering to the fact that the war was not yet over. Domitian knew that a full triumph could be achieved in the future, once the war concluded with complete conquest.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, Domitian was satisfied with the results of his campaign and contented himself with an unforgettable *ovatio* – a martial performance that appears to have eclipsed his previous triumphs, attested by the fact that his *ovatio* is recorded by several ancient authors, whereas his previous triumphs are never discussed in detail by anyone. Suetonius states,

⁸¹ Suet. *Dom.* 6; Dio 67.7.4; Murison 1988, 236; Jones 1992, 151; Southern 1997, 108. Cf. also Sil. Ital. *Pun.* 3.614-7 for a brief mention of Domitian's triumph and praise.

⁸² Concomitantly, Domitian selected Marcus Cocceius Nerva to serve with him as *consul ordinarius* back in Rome. Nerva served as an ordinary consul once before back in 71 with Vespasian – this being the only time in which Vespasian did not share his consulship with Titus. Nerva, therefore, was a long-time family friend, ally, and an avid proponent of Flavian policies. Thus, Domitian's choice for ordinary consul seemed clear enough, since Nerva himself was ostensibly a committed Flavian. Murison (Murison, C. L. 2003. *M. Cocceius Nerva and the Flavians*. APA Vol. 133, No. 1, pp. 147-57) suggests that Nerva was chosen by Domitian because "they had been close for over 20 years and, with his demonstrated long-time support for stability and the status quo (since at least 65) and for the Flavians version of these things in particular, Nerva was the ideal person to show that the crisis [the military revolt of Saturninus] of 89 was over." For other hypotheses on the selection of Nerva cf. 150-1, note 15.

⁸³ Suet. *Dom.* 6; Mart. 4.19.3; Jones 1992, 152; Southern 1997, 111.

⁸⁴ Tiberius, too, celebrated an *ovatio* for a war against the Pannonians in 9 CE, according to the Fasti Praenestini. Cf. also Stat. *Silv.* 3.3.167-71 for Domitian's refusal of a full triumph.

And after various battles, [Domitian] celebrated a double triumph over the Chatti and the Dacians; but as for the Sarmatians, he modestly offered a laurel crown to Jupiter [Optimus Maximus] on the Capitoline.⁸⁵

Additionally, Martial delivers the most detailed account of Domitian's *ovatio* in one of his epigrams:

While the newly-acquired glory of the Pannonian campaign is authenticated, and while every altar is offering propitious sacrifices to our returned Jupiter [i.e. Domitian], the people, the grateful equestrians, and the senate offer incense; and largesse from you for the third time enrich the Roman people. Rome will not forget these separate triumphs [i.e. ovationes], too; nor will these laurels gained in the peace you bring be considered any less glorious. Our emperor's virtue is at its greatest when he recognizes the interest of his people, and, in return, you are assured of their just devotion to you.⁸⁶

Martial alleges that, not only did Domitian celebrate a lesser triumph after finishing his campaign during the Second Pannonian War, but also that the Roman people, the *equites*, and the senate were present, and participated in his *ovatio*. Unlike the unprovoked wars against the Chatti, according to Suetonius, this war against the Sarmatians was unavoidable and an excellent candidate for the martial glory and respect which Domitian had long been seeking. However, the war against the Sarmatians was not finished; it was only put on hold. It is likely that Domitian wanted to wait until this inescapable and ensuing war could be properly concluded before he celebrated a *triumphus iustus*. This celebration is, I believe, the subject of Frieze A of the Cancellaria Reliefs, namely illustrating the return of Domitian from the Second Pannonian War to Rome, where he publicly celebrated an *ovatio* in January of 93, during which he was guided by Virtus to deliver the victory laurels to Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill.⁸⁷

IV.V: Frieze A of the Cancellaria Reliefs: The *Ovatio* of Domitian

The subject of the Cancellaria Reliefs has been exhaustively studied since their discovery adjacent to the tomb of the consul Aulus Hirtius in 1937 (the area of which was likely used as a stone-mason's

⁸⁵ Suet. Dom. 6: *De Chattis Dacisque post varia proelia duplicem triumphum egit, de Sarmatis lauream modo Capitolino Iovi rettulit.*

⁸⁶ Mart. 8.15: *Dum nova Pannonici numeratur gloria belli, Omnis et ad reducem dum litat ara Iovem, Dat populus, dat gratus eques, dat tura senatus, Et ditant Latias tertia dona tribus: Hos quoque secretos memoravit Roma triumphos, Nec minor ista tuae laurea pacis erat, Quod tibi de sancta credis pietate tuorum. Principis est virtus maxima, nosse suos.*

⁸⁷ The *adventus* of Domitian in 93 was first proposed by Simon 1960 (and maintained in her 1985 article. Ghedini (1986, 297) supports Domitian's arrival in Rome in 93, but calls the scene rather a *reditus*. D'Ambra (1994, 87, no. 12) and Milhous (1992, 273-9) support both Simon's and Ghedini's hypotheses of the *adventus* in 93.

workshop). Yet there still remains no scholarly consensus on determining the iconography and the subject of the reliefs.⁸⁸ Although both reliefs are of great interest, I will only be focusing on Frieze A, since the relief depicts the coupling of Domitian and the goddess Virtus, thereby forever solidifying their relationship in stone, which Domitian had officially established in 84 when he began to strike coins in honor of Virtus. In 1945, Filippo Magi published the first monograph on the Cancelleria Reliefs that still serves as the foundation for our understanding of the reliefs. Although not all of his propositions are convincing, Magi was the first to realize what has now been universally accepted as fact, namely that the visage of Domitian on Frieze A had been reworked into the likeness of Nerva in antiquity.⁸⁹ The disproportionate size of Nerva's head relative to his body, the evidence of recutting around the head and neck line, the residual Flavian hairstyle of the head (Domitian's *coma in gradus formata* coiffure), the Flavian style of the reliefs, and the ideological circumstances surrounding Domitian's death attest to the reworking of Domitian's original portrait. The transformation of Domitian's image is indicative of the fact that the relief was intended to be repurposed after Domitian's assassination and consequent *damnatio memoriae*. And we must take into consideration that whatever military performance Domitian attended, Nerva did the same, otherwise the recontextualized [myth]-historical occasion represented on Frieze A would be illogical and the recutting would be unjustified. But, first, I will examine the iconography of Frieze A, affirming that the identity of the Amazon goddess is unequivocally Virtus and demonstrating her role in Domitian's *ovatio* celebrated in January of 93.

Frieze A once comprised four slabs of Carrara marble, although the left slab is lost (**Fig. 130**).⁹⁰

However, a singular left wing overlaps the second slab in the upper left-hand corner, corroborating the

⁸⁸ The reliefs were discovered at the site of the Palazzo della Cancelleria Apostolica, hence the appellation of the reliefs "Cancelleria." See Milhous (1992, 271-2) for an exhaustive bibliography on the Cancelleria Reliefs up to 1992. I would only add D'Ambra (1994), Baumer (2007; 2008), Hölscher 2009, 54-9, and Petruccioli (2014) as other significant sources on the study of the Cancelleria Reliefs after 1992.

⁸⁹ *Contra* Schefold (1949, 546-8) who has suggested that the portrait was originally a depiction of Nerva, but the artist made the image too large, so his image was reworked.

⁹⁰ Because Frieze A and Frieze B were found together, because their height and cornices are the same, and because we know the original length of Frieze B, it can be construed that the length of Frieze A is 6.058m, just the same as Frieze B.



Figure 130: Cancelleria Frieze A. Ca. 93-96 CE.

presence of Victoria on the left-hand side of the composition. Thus, we, at least, know a fraction of the subject matter on the first slab. Victoria's attendance in the company of the emperor makes it clear that the scene commemorates a victory; for Victoria never appears before a victory is procured on Roman monuments celebrating victory. Victoria represents the divine product of a successful conclusion of war, not a precursor to the waging of war or a prolepsis of impending victory.⁹¹ The presence of Victoria also lends credence to the identification of Virtus as the Amazon goddess in the focus of the composition, since the appearance of Virtus is, again, predicated on the successful conclusion of war. Just like Victoria, the goddess Virtus is not a precursor to war, but the divine reward for winning the war. That the image of Virtus is never used proleptically and only appears after a victory over a foreign enemy is substantiated by every monument fabricated in Rome discussed above: Marcellus' cult statue of Virtus after his victory over the Gauls; Marius' cult statue after his victory over the Cimbri and the Teutones; Virtus on the Ara Pacis after Augustus' successful campaigns in Spain and Gaul; Virtus on the Augustus Cup (a replication of a famous relief) along with Mars, who leads the subjugated provinces of Rome to Augustus; Virtus on the Medinaceli Reliefs, who carries Augustus through triumph; Virtus/Andreia on the Sebasteion in

⁹¹ Hölscher 2009, 57. With the exception of a sesterius minted by Severus Alexander, which shows the emperor on horseback chasing Victoria with a wreath in flight (*RIC 4 Sev. Alex.* 596b, e, 640-1). However, the chase of Victoria in flight demonstrates that she has not yet been obtained.

Aphrodisias, which celebrates the victories of the Julio-Claudian emperors; the statue of Virtus commissioned by Domitian represented on his Virtus coins, minted right after his triumph over the Chatti; Virtus on the Arch of Titus celebrating the subjugation of Judaea; and Virtus on the Vatican Relief, the victory of which is unknown. *Virtus* cannot be claimed before it is gained in war; for it has to be recognized in order for it to be valid. Moreover, Virtus is often represented in the same composition as Victoria in victory scenes, for example on the Augustus Cup, on the Medinaceli Reliefs, represented together on issues of coins minted by Galba, and on the Arch of Titus, both in the Triumphator Relief and on the keystone (Virtus) and flanking spandrels (Victoriae); and, later, as Honos becomes less popular in the visual repertoire of Rome, Virtus is often paired with Victoria instead.

If the Amazon goddess on Frieze A were Roma, then we should anticipate that the iconography of Roma on Frieze B be congruous with the iconography of the Amazon on Relief A, since the images belong to the same monument; however, the goddesses have been consciously designed to appear distinct, likely so that the viewer can distinguish between the two divinities, one being ideologically important to Domitian (Virtus), and the other who rarely appears in the visual arts of the Domitianic period (Roma). Otherwise, we would have to understand that the two goddesses were meant to be easily conflated, subverting the fact that they have served entirely different roles in previous visual compositions. If this were the case, then the meaning of the goddesses who assume their traditional roles on public monuments would be lost on the viewer. And the question would remain why the paradigm of Virtus as herald of the emperor in victory scenes, established by the Julio-Claudians and subsumed by Domitian, has now been suddenly deferred to Roma. That is not to say that the images of Virtus and Roma were not confused in antiquity. Their iconographical elements are so similar and, sometimes, occasionally identical that the question is not a matter of if, but a matter of how often their identities were mistaken, just as they are today. However, their ideological meaning and duties as goddesses in myth-historical compositions are never the same. It was not the duty of Roma to guide the emperor; that job was reserved

for Virtus. Just as it was not the duty of Virtus to represent the seat of Rome. And their iconographies and duties do not deviate from their established canon on the Cancelleria Reliefs.



Figure 131: Cancelleria Frieze B: detail of seated Roma. Ca 93-96 CE.

The role of Roma as an enthroned matronly figure on Frieze B accords with her role in Republican coinage, on the Monument of Zoilos, and on Julio-Claudian monuments, namely as a seated goddess representing the city of Rome, attested by her seated image on the Ara Pacis, on the Carthage Relief, on the Gemma Augustea, on the Vienna Cameo, on the Sebasteion, and more relevantly, on both the Actian Reliefs and Medinaceli Reliefs, both groups of which feature Roma's participation in Augustus' triumphal procession as a seated observer and, likely, as a location device. Here, Roma is seated on a cushioned throne rather than a pile of arms, observing the central scene of Frieze B (**Fig. 131**). She dons an elaborate helmet with a high crest, the plume of which drapes to the bottom of the helmet. The body of the helmet is decorated with a griffin and the front of the crest is supported by a sphinx. The strands of her hair beneath her helmet are wavy and cascade to her right shoulder. In her right hand, she wields a spear. She wears a single-belted chiton that exposes her breast, bunched at the left shoulder and knotted at the sternum. Her chiton is comparable to those represented on Republican coins, on the Zoilos Monument, on the Ara Pacis, on the Carthage Relief, on the Gemma Augustea, and on the Vienna Cameo, all of which demonstrate that Roma wore a long chiton, un-belted or single-belted, that exposes her right breast and drapes past her knees to her feet. Although the length of the chiton cannot be discerned, the fact that it is only a single-belted garment that corresponds to the standard iconography of the seated Roma type suggests that the artist had a longer chiton in mind when creating her image, *contra* the double-belted short tunic of Virtus on Frieze A.



Figure 132: Denarius from Lugdunum featuring a Neronian image of seated Roma. 81 CE.

Moreover, the importance of Roma's image to Domitian was negligible. Domitian, in his 15 years as emperor of Rome, never minted a single coin featuring Roma, whereas he minted Virtus coins ever year from 84, following his triumph over the Chatti, to the year of his death in 96. This fact also lends credence to the identification of the Amazon goddess on Frieze A as Virtus, the goddess with which Domitian had a public relationship, as opposed to Roma. Only in 81, at the end of Titus'

reign or at the very beginning of Domitian's reign, were a few rare coins minted depicting a seated Roma type at a provincial mint in Lugdunum; however, the reverse die is residual and originally belonged to Nero, but was reused during both Vespasian's and Titus' principates.⁹² The reverse depicts Roma seated on a cuirass (**Fig. 132**). She wears a crested helmet and carries a wreath in her right hand and a *parazonium* in her left. Her dress is an unbelted chiton that exposes her right breast. Although the chiton does not completely cover her legs, it is bunched up on her right thigh with excessive folds and drapes off of her left thigh, attesting to its long length as a chiton as opposed to a short tunic. Although this image of Roma was originally created by the moneyers of Nero, it became the standard iconography of the seated Roma type of the Flavian period until it was discontinued by Domitian altogether in 81; however, this was the seated Roma type that would have been most familiar to the public at the time in which the Cancelleria Reliefs were created, demonstrating that Roma wore a long chiton and not a short, double-belted tunic like the one Virtus wears. As for a standing Roma type – the image of which has sometimes co-opted the iconography of Virtus – none exist under Domitian.⁹³ The iconography of Virtus under the principate of Domitian was reserved for Virtus.

⁹² *BMCRE Vesp.* 860b; *Tit.* 314; *BMCRE Ner.* 396, 399-404.

⁹³ With the exception of cistophori minted in Asia Minor (Pergamon?) that depicts a temple dedicated to Augustus and Roma. A standing Roma, dressed in a long chiton and holding a cornucopia crowns Augustus. This is the same reverse die originally made during the principate of Claudius, discussed above, and reused by this same Asian mint during the reigns of Vespasian,



Figure 133: Cancellaria Frieze A: detail of Virtus. Ca. 93-96CE.

sideburns, which Roma lacks. She wears her conventional short Amazonian tunic, rather than a chiton like the one Roma wears on Frieze B. The tunic divests her right breast and is twice belted at the midriff and at the waist, whereas Roma's chiton is only single-belted. She also wears pelt boots, ornamented with a ribbon and a flower. Around her right shoulder and chest is a balteus, which carries the hilt of a sword at her left hip, most probably meant to be her iconic *parazonium*. Roma on Frieze B does not wear a balteus. Also, the musculature of the arms is discernible; Virtus' right arm has distinct muscular features, whereas Roma's right arm is muscle-less. Virtus' left arm is covered by the round shield she carries, embossed with

On Frieze A, the iconography of Virtus is different from the iconography of Roma on Frieze B, as we would expect the goddess to be uniform in her iconography on the same monument for the sake of continuity and clarity of her identity, especially in the medium of sculpture produced in Rome, the artists of which rarely labeled their figures (Fig. 133).⁹⁴ Virtus dons a similar Attic helmet to Mars' on Frieze A and to Roma's on Frieze B, which is also decorated with a griffin on the body of the helmet and a sphinx supporting the crest; however, the plume is much longer and extends to the top of her left shoulder. Her hair is not wavy but, rather heavily curled. A drill was used on the tiny locks around her forehead, as well as on her curly strands in the back, giving her hair a voluminous quality. She also has

Domitian, and Nerva, cf. *BMCRE Claud.* 228; *RIC 1² Claud.* 120; *BMCRE Vesp.* 449; *RIC 2² Vesp.* 1450; *BMCRE Dom.* 254c; *RIC 2² Dom.* 854-5; *RIC 2² Nerv.* 122-3.

⁹⁴ *Contra* Roman art produced in the Greek world, e.g. the reliefs of the Sebasteion, whose four possible images of Roma needed labels to understand the disparate iconography of each, but, unfortunately, only one label survives, cf. discussion above.

a gorgon; and, behind it, she also carries an upright spear.⁹⁵ The shield is not a common attribute associated with Virtus; however, it is not unprecedented. The shield dedicated to Augustus by the senate, known as the *clipeus virtutis*, honored the emperor for his martial valor after he concluded the war against Antony and Cleopatra. Virtus/Andreia on Panel C24 of the Sebasteion holds onto a shield. Virtus on the coins minted by Nero rests her foot on a shield. An issue of Virtus coins minted during the Civil Wars (**Fig. 110**) depicts the profile of Virtus on the obverse and, on the reverse, a shield with spears; and, although Virtus is not holding the shield, the series still documents the relationship between Virtus and the shield. The Virtus coins struck in 70 at the beginning of Vespasian's reign depict Virtus with spear and *parazonium*, next to whom a round shield rests at her side (**Fig. 117**). And, beginning with the reign of Marcus Aurelius, Virtus is depicted with a shield, evidenced by the Aurelian Adventus Panel Relief; and it becomes a common attribute of Virtus on coins beginning with Commodus.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, Virtus, here, is presented with a shield, not only to conform to the iconography of Mars and Minerva, who also bear similar round shields in the same manner as Virtus, but also because the ensemble of Domitian's three gods of war,



Figure 134: Cancelleria Frieze A: detail of Mars, Minerva, Domitian, and Virtus. Ca. 93-96 CE.

Mars, Minerva, and Virtus, who surround Domitian with their bodies and shields, emphasizes his own martial character as the defender of Rome (**Fig. 134**). In any case, the facts that: a) Domitian never minted a single Roma-type coin during his reign, yet minted issues of Virtus coins with a new,

⁹⁵ It is an anomaly for Virtus to carry more than one attribute in her hand: the shield and spear. The spear must belong to Virtus because the weapons of the lictors and the soldiers are all accounted for.

⁹⁶ *RIC 3 Comm.* 160, 505, 510.

proprietary Virtus type, every year since 84; that b) Virtus is given a significant role on Domitian's Arch of Titus in the Triumphator Relief and on its keystone, as well as on the Domitianic Vatican Relief; that c) Virtus became an animated participant as the guide of the emperor in victory scenes since the Julio-Claudian period and not Roma; that d) the iconography of Virtus in Frieze A is divergent to the iconography of Roma in Frieze B in order to visually differentiate between the two Amazon goddesses; and that e) Virtus is partnered with Victoria and Mars, who, from this moment on, become an ideological triad in victory scenes, confirm the identification of the Amazon goddess on Frieze A as Virtus.⁹⁷

Therefore, because Victoria and Virtus are both present on Frieze A, both of whom only make an appearance on state monuments after a victory is obtained, a *profectio*, or the setting out on a campaign, for which some scholars have argued, is iconographically impossible. Victoria and Virtus, do not march off to war with the emperor; their divine gifts have to be earned in battle after which the goddesses appear, representing their conferred gifts upon the emperor. Moreover, a *profectio* is not an accomplishment, i.e. *victoria* and *virtus* were not earned during a *profectio*. Thus, Frieze A must depict another event, in which Domitian laid claim to both *victoria* and *virtus*, some sort of victory celebration in lieu of a full triumph, namely because the subject of Frieze A does not support the iconography of a triumph. And there was only one victory achievement in Rome celebrated by Domitian that was not a triumph, but still worthy of celebration and exaltation: Domitian's *ovatio*, commemorated upon his return from the Pannonian campaign in 93.

The idea that Frieze A depicts Domitian's *ovatio* in which he delivers the Sarmatian laurels to Jupiter Capitolinus in 93 was first proposed by Simon in 1960. However, her hypothesis never gained much

⁹⁷ The appearance of Mars (often in the same scene as Virtus and Victoria) is common on victory monuments: on the Northwest Panel of the Ara Pacis; on the Medinaceli Reliefs; on the Augustus Cup of the Boscoreale group, on which Mars leads the subjugated nations to Augustus; the statue of Mars in/on the Arch of Nero: *BMCRE Nero* 183-90, 329-34; *RIC 1² Nero* 393, cf. also 143-50, 392, 432-3, 498-500, 573-5; on the Adventus Relief of Marcus Aurelius; on the keystones of the central bay of the Arch of Septimius Severus in the Forum; on the southwest frieze of attic of the Quadrifrons of Septimius Severus at Lepcis Magna; and on the north face of the south pier of the Arch of Galerius.

traction, partly because her conjecture that the scene portends the apotheosis of Domitian is tenuous (although she rescinds her original hypothesis in her 1985 article, and replaces it with a more general visual theme celebrating the “*virtus principis*,” which I fully support); and partly because the *profectio* theory was the most popular theory among contemporary male scholars. These scholars rejected an *adventus*, hinged on their theory that the gods appear to be rushing to the left, pressuring the reticent Domitian to march to war, especially “Roma,” who pushes Domitian out of Rome.⁹⁸ However, as I have demonstrated above, Domitian was a warmonger, self-destined for military renown, and spent much of his reign out on campaign in an attempt to search for *virtus* that would yoke the martial glory he coveted. He did not need to be provoked by anyone or any deity to enter the theater of war. Thus, Mars, Minerva, and Virtus are not advocating that Domitian immediately depart from Rome to seek warfare; their presence elucidates that the war is already over. Moreover, Domitian wears simple *calcei*, a tunic, and *paludamentum*, which, some suggest, alludes to Domitian’s setting out on campaign; however, Last has demonstrated that the notion that an emperor in a tunic and *paludamentum* must be dressed for travel is a fallacy.⁹⁹ And Toynbee adds that Domitian’s clothing is no less appropriate for an *adventus* than for a *profectio*, citing the fact that Marcus Aurelius on the Aurelian Adventus Panel Relief is dressed in a tunic and *paludamentum* as he travels through the streets of Rome during his *adventus* (not to mention that

⁹⁸ Hamberg (1945, 53) postulates that Domitian’s defiance in going to war is the result of divine pressure brought against his will, represented by his hesitation. For the interpretation of a *profectio*, cf. Hamberg 1945, 52; Toynbee 1946, 180; 1947, 187; 1957, 9-12; Neutsch 1946-8, 101; Bianchi Bandinelli 1946-8, 259-69; Bendinelli 1949, 4-8;; Kähler 1950, 33; 1960, 255; Alföldi 1959, 6; Koeppl 1969, 138-44; Linfert 1969, 56-8; McCann 1972, 274; Oppermann 1985, 49-52; Hannestad 1986, 132-9; Kleiner 1992, 191-2; Pollini 2017, 116. For the interpretation of an *adventus*, cf. Magi 1945, 98; Simon 1960, 136-151; 1985, 554-5; Hölscher 1967, 53, no 317; 2009, 56-9; 1990, 301-2; Ghedini 1986, 293-4; Baumer 2008, 189. Last (1948), D’Ambra (1994), and Petruccioli (2014) remain neutral; however, D’Ambra (pg. 87, no. 12) finds Simon’s (1985) interpretation as an *adventus* plausible. Cf. also Henderson (2003, 244-53), who also opposes labeling the scene an *adventus* or *profectio*, although his analysis of the Cancellaria Reliefs is so incomprehensible due to his flippant writing style and lack of seriousness that it is very unclear what his point is. Milhous (1992, 277-9), however, again posits an apotheosis of the emperor scene (following Simon 1960), even though Simon retracted her theory. However, nothing about the iconography of the composition conveys a visual message of apotheosis. We would expect an eagle, or a chariot, or a *tensa*. And, even though it is said that Domitian encouraged people to call him *dominus et deus*, it would still be unusual and, frankly, risky, for Domitian to claim apotheosis while he was still alive. A visual statement like an apotheosis would likely jeopardize obtaining an actual apotheosis after his death.

⁹⁹ Last 1948, 12, no. 3.

he is escorted by Mars, Victoria, and Virtus).¹⁰⁰ Therefore, the tunic and *paludamentum* combination does not preclude an *adventus*, but rather supports it. If Domitian is dressed for travel, then is it not improbable that, after rushing back to Rome from Pannonia in January of 93, he immediately dedicated the victory laurels to Jupiter upon his return, still wearing his traveling attire. This would also account for the pacing of the gods, who are eager for Domitian to prove his *virtus* with a demonstration of the victory laurels from Pannonia in front of Jupiter, the senate, and the Roman people, whose recognition Domitian needed to validate the legitimacy of his rule, just as his father's and brother's reigns were validated by their recognized *virtus* acquired during their Judaeian campaigns.

Positioned between the animated gods, Domitian comes to an arresting halt. He carries a scroll in his left hand and stretches his right arm out to gesticulate toward the subject of the missing slab on which Victoria glides.¹⁰¹ His gesture has been interpreted by Simon as one of salutation or prayer, as he focuses on the missing subject of the first slab.¹⁰² And Hölscher adds that the emperor raises his hand as a gesture of salutation only during an *adventus*.¹⁰³ A gesture of deference is the only gesture that is compatible with the position of his arm, hand, and fingers. Therefore, Domitian is not departing from Rome, but has, rather, arrived at his destination, the subject of which is lost forever. However, Magi, believing that the scene conveyed an *adventus*, reconstructed the missing slab to show the city gate, represented by a column, through which Domitian must have entered upon his return from Pannonia.¹⁰⁴ Simon refutes Magi's reconstruction on the grounds that there are no other architectural elements in the Cancelleria group and the '*adventus*' on Frieze B (if it is an *adventus*) proves that it can relay its message as an

¹⁰⁰ Toynbee 1947, 187-8.

¹⁰¹ Toynbee (1957, 10) suggests that the scroll contains the law to be imposed on conquered tribes.

¹⁰² Simon 1960, 138; Toynbee (1957, 10) similarly suggests that the image of Domitian is one of religious awe and solemn dignity rather than pacificism, despite the fact that she supports the theory of the *profectio*.

¹⁰³ Hölscher 2009, 56-7; *Contra* Brilliant (1963, 112), who suggests that the gesture associates Domitian and Minerva in a visual union. However, Domitian's gesture and gaze stretch across Minerva's body, indicating that Minerva was not the intended subject of Domitian's gesture of salutation/reverence.

¹⁰⁴ Magi 1945, 99ff.

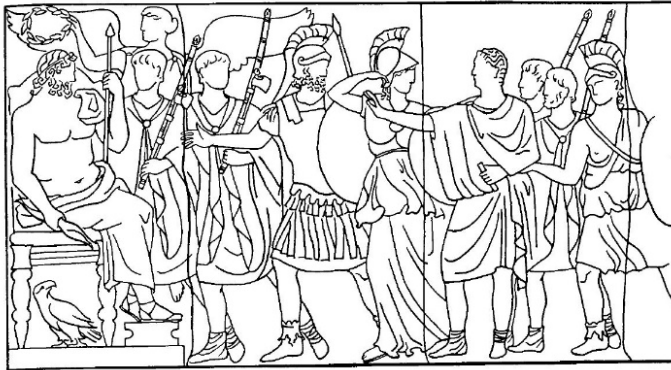


Figure 135: Reconstruction of Cancelleria Frieze A by Simon.

adventus without any architectural features.¹⁰⁵ Simon, rather, redesigns the missing slab to depict Jupiter instead, whose presence would accord with the divinity of the composition, as well as Domitian's gesture of deference toward the subject of the lacuna (**Fig. 135**). Simon hypothesizes

that Jupiter was seated on a throne, representing his seat on the Capitoline Hill, where Domitian is said to have proffered the Sarmatian laurels in 93. Since there is no evidence that Domitian held an object in his right hand, Simon adds that Victoria held the Pannonian laurels to be bequeathed to Jupiter, similar to the way in which she delivers the *corona civica* to the emperor on Frieze B.¹⁰⁶

Thus, the scene is clear: at the far left of the composition is Jupiter, whether sitting, standing, or represented by his temple. Victoria leads the way of the procession toward Jupiter. Proceeding forward next to Victoria are two youthful lictors, whose *fasces* are decorated with laurel sprouting from the tops of the rods, again signifying that a victory has already been achieved. Next come the martial divinities that are the most significant to Domitian's claim for military glory: Mars, Minerva, and Virtus, all of whom encompass the emperor in an attempt to visually emphasize his martial aptitude. Mars turns his head back to optically engage with the Domitian and gesticulates in a similar manner as the emperor. He stretches out his right arm toward the missing subject of the scene, likely to help guide the gaze of the viewer from the emperor to Jupiter, ideologically symbolizing the emperor's meeting with Jupiter through warfare, personified and endorsed by the god of war. His shoulder straps are decorated with Jupiter's lightning bolts and his shield's device depicts Jupiter Ammon, which testifies to the fact that Jupiter is,

¹⁰⁵ Simon 1960, 138.

¹⁰⁶ Simon 1945, 145.

indeed, meant to be invoked in the scene of Frieze A. As the patron goddess of Domitian, Minerva takes her position at the emperor's side.¹⁰⁷ Gazing back toward Domitian, she advances forward and positions her right arm with the back of the hand resting on the back of her helmet. Her gesture has perplexed scholars; however, I agree with Magi who has interpreted the gesture as an act of retracting the helmet just a bit to demonstrate that battle has been arrested.¹⁰⁸ Domitian's body overlaps that of his tutelary goddess Minerva, indicating that he is not following her, but rather signifying that he has reached his destination – the Capitoline Hill. Domitian halts in awe before Jupiter Capitolinus, which accords with Suetonius' account that he offered a laurel crown to Jupiter in recognition of his Sarmatian campaign in lieu of holding a full triumph.

Behind the emperor is Virtus.¹⁰⁹ Her image as goddess of the martial excellence displayed in warfare and her coupling with Domitian as the focus of the entire victory composition is germane. As I have demonstrated above, *virtus* was the only quality and qualification Domitian needed that could not be self-claimed. It had to be earned on the battlefield and publicly recognized for it to be considered a legitimate virtue of the emperor. This is substantiated by the fact that Domitian did not mint Virtus types during the first four years of his reign because he did not possess the martial success in *virtus*, which he could claim as a valid and honored privilege. However, he possessed the loyalty of the Flavian armies to aid in his quest for *virtus* in the lands of the barbarians living on the fringes of the empire. When Domitian

¹⁰⁷ Dio 67.1; Suet. *Dom.* 15.

¹⁰⁸ Magi 1945, 103. Toynbee (1957, 13) has suggest that Minerva is putting on her helmet to go to war. Simon (1960, 146) assumes that the gesture is symbolic of her epiphany. D'Ambra believes that the gesture could be Minerva' recognition of Domitian or a gesture of affiliation between Minerva and Domitian.

¹⁰⁹ For the identification of the Amazon goddess on Frieze A as Roma, cf. Magi 1945, 98; Hamberg 1945, 52; Last 1948, 9; Kähler 1950, 33; Brilliant 1963, 102; Béranger 1964, 79; D'Ambra 1994, 81ff; Engemann 1995, 636; Varner 2004, 199. For Virtus, cf. Toynbee 1946, 180; 1957, 10; Bianchi Bandinelli 1946-1948, 259; Alföldi 1959, 6; Kähler 1960, 255; Keller 1967, 198; Koeppel 1969, 141; Pfanner 1983, 68; Simon 1985, 554-5; Oppermann 1985, 45-6; Ghedini 1986, 296; Hannestad 1986, 136; Milhous 1992, 272ff; Landskron 2006, 158; Baumer 2007, 96ff; Petruccioli 2014, 11. Hölscher (2009, 56) is indifferent. Bendinelli (1949) is the only scholar who has interpreted the image of the Amazon goddess to be Bellona on the grounds that Virtus is generally depicted in the company of Honos. He also interprets the Amazon goddess on Frieze B to be Bellona on the grounds that Roma did not acquire cult status in Rome until the reign of Hadrian. Unfortunately for Bendinelli, Bellona has no known image and Virtus no longer joins the company of Honos on imperial victory monuments beginning with the Domitianic period; and, henceforth, she is most often paired with Victoria and/or Mars.

was finally able to claim a victory against the Chatti in 83, whether justified or not, he was, thenceforth, ideologically licensed to proclaim that he had acquired *virtus* during his campaigns. And, consequently, he began to mint many issues of coins depicting his image on the obverse and the image of the goddess Virtus on the reverse, representing the *virtus* he acquired from conquering the Germans. However, it appears that Domitian was insecure about his victory over the Chatti, or, perhaps, he felt that his victory was not enough to maintain his newly found reputation in *virtus*. Thus, in order to maintain his *virtus*, Domitian initiated another campaign against the Dacians, which resulted in a diplomatic victory rather than a military conquest. One more time did Domitian attempt warfare with the barbarians to retain his valor, this time against the Sarmatian tribes in Pannonia in 92, which resulted in a temporary victory; for, the battle was won, but the war was not yet over, likely because it was winter. And due to the fact that the war was not yet over, Domitian refused to hold a triumph for a victory against the Sarmatians, but settled, rather, for an *ovatio* that was celebrated in Rome as soon as he returned from Pannonia in January of 93.¹¹⁰ During his *ovatio*, he proffered the victory laurels to Jupiter on the Capitoline – the subject of Frieze A. The *virtus* of the emperor (Virtus), protected by his tutelary deity (Minerva) and acquired through warfare (Mars), made his victory possible (Victoria), which resulted in the delivered laurels on the Capitoline Hill (Jupiter). Thus, the Amazon goddess does not so unflatteringly and brazenly nudge Domitian forward, but, rather, her peculiar gesture of her hand placed under his arm is a gesture of affirmation.¹¹¹ Because the goddess only appears in victory scenes after victory has been claimed, the presence of Virtus visually conveys that the goddess is not only validating Domitian's martial excellence, but is also sanctioning his victory gained on behalf of his martial excellence – a gift from the goddess. She is the *virtus Augusti* emblazoned on Domitian's coins – the image of Domitian's glory.

¹¹⁰ Versnel (1970, 165-80)

¹¹¹ Toynbee (1957, 10) asserts that Virtus does not forcibly push the emperor to go to war, but she, rather, gives her support and encouragement to move forward in heavenly company. Varner (2004, 119) correctly states that the interpretation of Virtus (mistakenly identified as Minerva) urging Domitian to leave the city would have portrayed Domitian in an unflattering light.



Figure 136: Cancellaria Frieze A: detail of Genius Senatus and Genius Populi Romani. Ca. 93-96 CE.

Behind Virtus follow the Genius Senatus and the Genius Populi Romani (Fig. 136). The Genius Senatus is represented as an older, bearded togatus. In his left hand, he carries a scepter, crowned with a miniature togate bust [of the emperor?] (now destroyed) and wears a ring on his ring

finger. In a gesture similar to Domitian's, the Genius Senatus extends his right arm toward the left side of the scene and gesticulates, perhaps with a comparable inference of salutation or reverence for either the emperor or for Jupiter. The Genius Populi Romani, despite the fact that his iconography has co-opted the iconography of Honos, is likely not Honos.¹¹² He does not seem, in any way, to spatially complement Virtus – his Republican and Julio-Claudian partner, whereas the coupling of the Genius Senatus and the Genius Populi Romani appears to become more prevalent beginning in the principate of Domitian, at the same time in which Virtus and Victoria begin to appear frequently together. The Genius Populi Romani is semi-nude youth, draped at the waist and over his left shoulder. He carries an elaborately decorated cornucopia in the crook of his arm and gestures to the left side of the scene with his right arm in the same fashion as the Genius Senatus. Drill holes around their heads attest to the addition of laurel wreaths that continues to justify a victory scene. Together, the Genius Senatus and the Genius Populi Romani illustrate the rhetorical formula *S[ENATVS] POPVLVS]Q[VE] R[OMANVS]* through the visual arts rather than represented through an inscription.¹¹³

¹¹² Although, it is interesting to note that the Genius here is booted, whereas the Genius Populi Romani on Frieze B is barefoot. The difference between their iconographies has yet to be explained. But, perhaps, these subtle differences do matter, which suggests that they might not be the same divinity. Could one of these cornucopia-bearing youths be Honos?

¹¹³ Béranger 1975, 401; D'Ambra 1994, 83.



Figure 137: Cancelleria Frieze A: detail of four Roman soldiers. Ca. 93-96 CE.

Four Roman soldiers complete the composition of Frieze A, perhaps as visual representatives of the praetorian prefect (**Fig. 137**). The cohort, dressed in tunics and mantles, is led by their commanding officer, who is portrayed as a seasoned, bearded soldier. He carries the largest weapon – a lance with a

leaf-shaped spear-head and a shaft entwined in rope in his right hand. In his left, he carries a round shield, designed with a feather pattern, which he holds in an unsophisticated manner, haphazardly grabbing it from the exterior.¹¹⁴ Rather than pay attention to the ceremony of the emperor, the commanding officer turns his head back toward his following troops. The last three soldiers are unbearded youths, who carry unusual tapering javelins and oblong shields, elaborately decorated with stars, crescents, wings, and meandering patterns. Alföldi, in his article on the significance of *hastae* in Rome's system of military ranks, argues that the cohort leader does not wield the attributes of his own rank, but is rather the weapons-bearer of the emperor. He also believes that the shield is decorated with an aegis pattern, alluding to Minerva.¹¹⁵ However, we would expect the aegis pattern to correspond with Minerva's actual aegis; however, it does not. The design of Minerva's aegis comprises rows of scales, a snaky border, and a central

¹¹⁴ Toynbee (1957, 12) describes the round shield as decorated with scales; however, if you compare these "scales" with the scales on Minerva's aegis, the iconography is completely different. Minerva's scales do not have central spines like central spines seen on the "scales" of the shield; and that's because fish scales do not have central spines, but feathers do.

¹¹⁵ Alföldi 1959, 7.



Figure 138: Sestertius of Domitian featuring Germania with shield and the emperor on the reverse. Domitianic period.



Figure 139: Denarius of Domitian. Domitianic period featuring Germania sitting on shield on the reverse.



Figure 140: Sestertius of Domitian featuring Pax lighting a pile of arms ablaze on the reverse. Domitianic period.

gorgon; and her personal round shield is ornamented with laurel and acanthus. The officer's shield is decorated with feathers and there is no indication of a shield device, gorgon or otherwise.

If Frieze A depicted a *profectio*, we would expect the sequence of figures to correspond to a *profectio*, in which the soldiers immediately precede and succeed the emperor.¹¹⁶ We would also expect the Roman soldiers to be carrying or wearing their cuirasses and helmets which they would need to wage war; however, they are not. The soldiers rather seem to carry highly decorative ceremonial shields rather than utilitarian ones.¹¹⁷ And I am not convinced that these shields are even originally Roman. On issues of coins minted by Domitian depicting his German conquests, we see similar shields and spears that once belonged to the barbarians, representing the *spolia* Rome confiscated from their subjugated enemy. On the reverse of a sestertius is an image of a spear-bearing Domitian in cuirass, military tunic, and *paludamentum* subjugating a genuflecting German, who carries an oblong shield decorated with crescents (**Fig. 138**).¹¹⁸ The reverse of a denarius depicts a seated Germania bemoaning her fate as she sits on a pile of decorative shields and a broken spear, symbolizing that she is devoid of *virtus* (**Fig. 139**).¹¹⁹ Although the shields are not perfectly oblong, they are, nevertheless, highly ornamented with meandering patterns and stars. The

¹¹⁶ Hölscher 2009, 57; cf. also section G.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Ghedini (1986, 2930-4) who sees the decorative armor as a symbol of Domitian's sovereignty and power, following Alföldi (1959, 7). Varner (2004, 119), too, believes that the decorative shields and spears are ceremonial in nature.

¹¹⁸ *BMCRE Dom.* 299-300; *RIC 2² Dom.* 279, 469.

¹¹⁹ *BMCRE Dom.* 81-2, 85 (which Mattingly suggests is decorated with a winged thunderbolt (?) and two stars) 91, 94, 99, 114b, 125, 143, 174, 228, *RIC 2² Dom.* 325-6, 331, 340-1, 346-7, 432, 461, 513, 560, 586-7, 699, 747, 781-2; Carson 1978b, 42 (no. 516).

reverse of another sestertius depicts the goddess Pax, who sets ablaze a pile of barbarian arms and armor, comprising ornate oblong and round shields, a helmet, barbarian trumpets, and two spears or javelins with leaf-shaped tips, the same as the one carried by the commanding officer on Frieze A (**Fig. 140**).¹²⁰ On the reverse of an as is a pile of spoliated military accoutrements, comprising a barbarian trumpet, an enemy *vexillum*, two spears, and two oblong shields decorated with stars and annulets (**Fig. 141**).¹²¹ Lastly, the reverse of another sestertius portrays a defeated Germania mourning under a Roman trophy (**Fig. 142**). The trophy comprises two decorative oblong shields, two spears, a helmet and, in front, a round



Figure 141: As of Domitian featuring a pile of barbarian arms on the reverse. Domitianic period.



Figure 142: Sestertius of Domitian featuring Germania and Victoria inscribing a shield on trophy. Domitianic period.

shield on which Victoria inscribes *DE GER*, relaying the message to the viewer that this Roman trophy was constructed using the *spolia* of the conquered Germans.¹²² That the decorative shields and spears/javelins carried by the Roman soldiers on Frieze A are actually barbarian arms and armor representing the prizes of war – *spolia* – is conceivable.¹²³ This would account for their ceremonial presentation in procession, as well as the unusual way in which the officer of the cohort carries the round shield, as if it did not belong to him. In this case, Domitian's soldiers could be understood as the bearers of German *spolia* which will be deposited on the Capitoline Hill, perhaps in the Temple of Jupiter Feretrius. The foreign *spolia* lends credence to the certainty of a victory procession presented on Frieze A, rather than a *profectio*.

Thus, this victory procession of Frieze A, corroborated by the attendance of Victoria, Virtus, and the barbarian *spolia* commemorates

¹²⁰ *BMCRE Dom.* 295, 328c, 329; *RIC 2² Dom.* 276, 284, 354, 363-5, 641.

¹²¹ *BMCRE Dom.* 311, 351-2, 357; 383d; *RIC 2² Dom.* 296, 372, 386, 409, 419, 481, 495, 539.

¹²² *BMCRE Dom.* 295b, 330-1, 362b, 374-5, 407b; *RIC 2² Dom.* 285, 365, 405, 475-6.

¹²³ Similar oblong shields with decorative stars, crescents, and meandering patterns are depicted in the hands of the barbarians on the Column of Trajan.

the *ovatio* of Domitian, celebrated in January of 93 after completing his first Sarmatian campaign in Pannonia, the focus of which centered on the immutable relationship shared between Domitian and Virtus. If Domitian had celebrated a triumph, we would expect Virtus to guide the quadriga of the emperor toward military glory and maybe even toward apotheosis. However, Domitian deliberately refused a triumph over the Sarmatians because the Pannonian wars were far from over. Whatever victory he claimed at the end of 92 was immediately celebrated by holding an *ovatio* in 93 upon his return. However, Domitian desired that his *virtus* still be publicized. Rather than having her pull the reins of the emperor's triumphal quadriga, Domitian included Virtus on Frieze A to show her divine support, symbolized by her physical contact with the emperor, authenticating not only his intrinsic *virtus* gained during the Second Pannonian War, but also his victory which would not have been possible without his *virtus Augusti*. If Domitian were going to publicize himself on a victory monument in Rome as the people's defender of Rome, by whose *virtus* he maintains the safety and security of Rome's borders from the danger of her barbarian enemies, then it is the *virtus Augusti*, the martial excellence of the Roman emperor which Domitian needed to communicate clearly to the public. Although the composition of Frieze A is definitively a victory scene, the message is one of peace – peace brought to the people of Rome by the emperor's *virtus* in exchange for the validation of her authority, the public endorsement of his reign, and the hope of an apotheosis. Unfortunately for him, Domitian was assassinated in the fall of 96. His legacy, founded on the pillars of martial glory that only *virtus* could afford, forever disappeared. And he would never be able to join his father and brother, guided by *virtus*, in heaven.

IV.VI: Frieze A of the Cancellaria Reliefs Redux: The *Ovatio* of Nerva and his *Virtus Augusti*

On the 18th of September of 96, Domitian was assassinated, and, subsequently, the history of Rome was forever rewritten after Domitian fell subject to the damnation of his memory. His virtues were to be removed from public view. His coins were to be recalled.¹²⁴ His monuments were to be

¹²⁴ Shotter 1983, 217.

reappropriated. His image was to be damned.¹²⁵ And whatever reputation in martial *virtus* he possessed no longer mattered. Frieze A is an unambiguous *exemplum* of the consequences of a public *damnatio memoriae*.¹²⁶ After Nerva's accession to the throne, the Cancellaria Reliefs were removed from their monument, most certainly a public victory monument in Rome, and Frieze A was purposely reworked into the portrait of Nerva.

The recarving of Domitian on Frieze A into the portrait of Nerva is only generally accepted as *the* consequence of Domitian's damnation, implying that, whether it may have appeared logical or not, it was the appropriate action to take, as was the protocol of *damnatio memoriae*. Most scholars believe that the reconfiguration of Domitian into the likeness of Nerva appears illogical in a historical context, leading to the belief that this was one of two reasons why the Cancellaria Reliefs were eventually deconstructed. Toynbee asserted that, "the recutting of the imperial head as Nerva in frieze A makes nonsense of [Domitian's] 'profectio.'"¹²⁷ Varner proposes that, "in addition to the likelihood that the recutting was interrupted by Nerva's own death in 98, the specificity of the events portrayed, as well as the prominence of Minerva, Domitian's protectress in Frieze A, all may have added further conceptual difficulties to reusing these pieces."¹²⁸ It was only Last who considered the adaptation of Nerva in lieu of Domitian, stating that, "if the portrait of Domitian was changed into Nerva, the man who made the change would most naturally be taken to have thought the frieze to show Domitian doing something which Nerva also

¹²⁵ Dio 68.1.

¹²⁶ The original location of the Cancellaria Reliefs cannot be ascertained without further evidence. However, the iconography of victory can be compared to the myth-historical Triumphator Relief from the Arch of Titus, and, thus, it is conceivable to assume that the events illustrated on the Cancellaria Reliefs were historical moments of martial victory which was meant to be viewed by the general public. As for their location, the Temple of Fortuna Redux has been previously suggested, which was constructed by Domitian in the Campus Martius after the Second Pannonian War, cf. Toynbee 1957, 19; Ghedini, 1986, 298-300; Shotter 1983, 217. On the other hand, the Templum Divorum, also located in the Campus Martius, was the location of the starting point of Titus' and Vespasian's co-triumph, during which they commemorated their victory over Judaea; cf. also Jones 1992, 87. Because of this, it is possible that Domitian's multiple triumphs, and perhaps his *ovatio*, had commenced here as well, thus, indicating another plausible location for the installment of the Cancellaria Reliefs, cf. Jones 1992, 87. Another plausible monument would be one of Domitian's arches, which no longer exist, but are attested by his coinage, as well as by Suetonius (13.2) and Dio (68.1.), cf. also Jones 1992, 86.

¹²⁷ Toynbee 1947, 188; cf. also 1957, 15-6, 20.

¹²⁸ Varner 2004, 120.

did... But Nerva, so far as we know, neither in the sixteen months of his principate, nor at any earlier time, set out from Rome to go to war or returned to Rome from a campaign; and that fact is a somewhat grave objection to both *profectio* and *adventus* as the subject here.”¹²⁹ However, what Last did not know was that there was a war transpiring during Nerva’s principate, namely Domitian’s Third Pannonian War, also known as the Suebic-Sarmatian War, which Domitian rekindled just before his assassination.¹³⁰ Domitian’s Third Pannonian War is given little regard by ancient and modern scholars due to the paucity of evidence. The archaeological record yields almost nothing; however, the epigraphical sources and numismatic evidence do provide support for the existence of the war.

In 101 and 102, a soldier named Lucius Aconius Statura was awarded an honorific inscription for his great accomplishments in Trajan’s Dacian War of those years. Statura was also awarded for his accomplishments in the previous German and Sarmatian Wars by the two previous emperors, according to an inscription, alleging that the two predecessors of Trajan, Domitian and Nerva respectively, were both at war in Pannonia.¹³¹ Moreover, Attius Priscus was honored with a crown by Nerva for his services in the Germano-Suebic War as part of the Pannonian Wars, according to another inscription, which is indicative of the fact that the Third Pannonian War did continue during Nerva’s reign.¹³² But the question of why Nerva was at war remains.

The Second Pannonian War described above never came to an end; it was delayed on the directive of Domitian. After Domitian celebrated his *ovatio* in 93, he spent the next three years, until his death, meticulously planning and organizing a massive military campaign against the Suebi and the Sarmatians, specifically the Suebic tribes of the Marcomanni and the Quadi, and the Sarmatian Iazyges tribe in

¹²⁹ Last 1948, 13.

¹³⁰ Jones 1992, 153-5.

¹³¹ *CIL* 11.5992; Jones 1992, 153; Southern 1997, 111.

¹³² *ILS* 2720; Jones 1992, 155.

Pannonia.¹³³ Domitian was devising a major tripartite conquest of the trans-Danubian lands, in order to expand the Roman-controlled German frontier northwards, which would bring him the greatest military prestige he could have ever hoped for, doubtless validating his martial *virtus*.¹³⁴ In August of 96, Domitian appointed Pompeius Longinus as the new governor to preside over Pannonia, whose appointment was Domitian's initial stratagem of his Third Pannonian War.¹³⁵ Corroborated by two military diplomas dating to the summer of 96, Domitian shifted his military forces, which were stationed in the north, and concentrated them on the Danube in Pannonia.¹³⁶ Longinus was sent to Pannonia along with his tribune and five legions.¹³⁷ In the summer of 96, seven Roman legions and nearly 60 auxiliary forces were positioned in Pannonia and Moesia Superior, Pannonia's contiguous neighbor. This comes to a total of approximately 70,000 Roman soldiers, at least.¹³⁸ For the martial glory of the emperor, the Roman army began to infiltrate Pannonia, assailing the Suebic and Sarmatian tribes – those same tribes who evaded Domitian's conquest earlier in 92, during the Second Pannonian War.¹³⁹

Meanwhile, back at Rome, tension had been escalating between Domitian and his domestic court, according to Suetonius.¹⁴⁰ His household held contempt for the emperor, whose behavior was becoming increasingly intolerable and cruel. He was executing many without warrant, putting both citizens and senators to death.¹⁴¹ Their contempt culminated after Domitian executed two of his courtiers: his cousin Flavius Clemens and his secretary Epaphroditus.¹⁴² Ultimately, Domitian's household, including his own wife Domitia, conspired to assassinate the emperor. Contemporaneously, the current war in Pannonia,

¹³³ Grainger 2003, 112-3.

¹³⁴ Grainger 2003, 114-5.

¹³⁵ Dated to July 12th, 96, cf. Grainger 2003, 22-4 and 113; cf. also Southern 1997, 111, 113.

¹³⁶ *AE* 722 and *CIL* 16.46; Jones 1992, 155.

¹³⁷ Supporting these five legions were several auxiliary units, comprised of at least six *alae* and perhaps up to forty cohorts: Jones 1992, 155.

¹³⁸ Grainger 2003, 113.

¹³⁹ Grainger 2003, 23.

¹⁴⁰ Suet. *Dom.* 14.

¹⁴¹ Suet. *Dom.* 10.

¹⁴² Suet. *Dom.* 14-5; Jones 1992, 193.

commanded by Longinus, was no secret in Rome in September of 96. And Domitian's courtiers and wife knew that he was going to depart for Pannonia shortly so as to be seen on the frontline for the sake of his *virtus*. If they were going to assassinate the emperor, they would have to act before he departed to commence his largest military operation ever.¹⁴³ Thus, on the 18th of September, 96, the emperor was assassinated, with Domitian's war for *virtus* and glory ensuing in Pannonia.¹⁴⁴

Nerva was left to finish Domitian's Third Pannonian War, which began in September, right before Domitian's assassination.¹⁴⁵ Little is known about the events of this war apart from the fact that it was begun by Domitian and left for his successor to manage.¹⁴⁶ The scarcity of historical details is due to the fact that the ancient historians mention almost nothing; however, enough non-literary sources indicate that the war did continue, and that it was an immense war – one that could not be easily abandoned. That the ancient historians consciously decided to leave the war out of their commentaries is, likely, due to the fact that the war was initiated by a damned emperor, and was perhaps considered to be little more than a defensive victory under the principate of Trajan.¹⁴⁷

How much Nerva was involved in the war is largely unknown; but indeed, he was involved, albeit unfavorably. Nerva unfortunately had no military experience just like Domitian when he began his reign and was also lacking a reputation in *virtus*, which was needed to support his rule. And at the ripe age of 65, he was little fit for battle. However, he had many advisors on the issue, and so the armies proceeded with the Third Pannonian War under his authority. This can be deduced by the numismatic evidence during the time of Nerva, which provides us with a historical commentary on Nerva's military operations.

¹⁴³ Grainger 2003, 48, 25-7.

¹⁴⁴ Suet. *Dom.* 18.

¹⁴⁵ Grainger 2003, 65.

¹⁴⁶ Grainger 2003, 115.

¹⁴⁷ Grainger (2003, 115-7) goes on to state: "The senatorial damnation of Domitian's memory expunged any appreciation of his intentions. Nerva's necessary concentration on events in Rome removed attention from the frontier problems, and Trajan's deliberate abstention from involvement on the Danube until the war was effectively all over, coupled with his refusal to take responsibility for the war, left it all in an historical limbo. Tacitus deliberately and selectively hid it, and later historians fell victim to the contemporary determination to forget the war ever happened."

During Nerva's Pannonian War, myriad issues of coins of the *CONCORDIA EXERCITUUM* type were minted. This type – a type which Domitian never struck – bears testament to Nerva's [desire for] favorable relations with Rome's armies, partitioning the martial glory and *virtus* amongst himself and his troops.¹⁴⁸ Moreover, merely weeks after the inception of Domitian's Third Pannonian War and his assassination, Nerva minted coins with the legend *VICTORIA AVGVST[II]*, corroborating that some military accomplishment was commemorated during the Third Pannonian War.¹⁴⁹ However, the war was far from over; the armies returned to their winter quarters by November of 96.¹⁵⁰ In January of 97, Nerva had minted another issue of the *VICTORIA AVGVST[II]* type, which, Grainger posits, would have been a reminder of Nerva's military achievement earlier that fall.¹⁵¹ Whatever Nerva's reason for commemorating this victory in his principate's circulation of coins is open to interpretation. However, Pliny tells us that toward the end of year 97, the legions finally claimed a more official victory in Pannonia on behalf of Nerva and of Rome. And this success led to a celebration in the city, commemorating a victory for Nerva, which, I believe, was (re-)memorialized on Frieze A of the Cancelleria Reliefs.

Sometime in the autumn of 97, Nerva received a letter decorated with laurel, most likely from the commander Longinus, with a declaration of victory in Pannonia.¹⁵² Pliny states:

*Laurels had been carried back from Pannonia, and this, at the behest of the gods, would glorify the rise of our unconquerable emperor as the symbol of his victory. Emperor Nerva laid them on the lap of Jupiter and, as was customary before the gathered assembly of gods and men, and feeling rather mighty and dignified, he, suddenly, chose you [Trajan] as his heir, and as his sole support in this time of his exhausted hour.*¹⁵³

¹⁴⁸ *BMCRE Nerv.* 4-8, 25-30, 53-5, 86, 92c, 95, 96d-e, 98g-h, 102-3, 122, 128, 133, 138, 141; *RIC 2² Nerv.* 2,3, 14-5, 26-7, 53-5, 69, 70, 79, 80-1, 95; Shotter 1983, 223-4.

¹⁴⁹ *BMCRE Nerv.* 21b-c, 50-1, 68-9, *RIC 2² Nerv.* 10, 21-2; Shotter 1983, 223-4.

¹⁵⁰ Grainger 2003, 59, 65.

¹⁵¹ Shotter 1983, 224 and Grainger 2003, 65.

¹⁵² Grainger 2003, 65, 96-99. See also Pliny, *NH* 15.133-4 for the significance of laurel as a symbol of victory, which accompanied messengers, who were to carry the word of success.

¹⁵³ Plin. *Pan.* 8.2-3: *Adlata erat ex Pannonia laurea, id agentibus dis ut invicti imperatoris exortum victoriae insigne decoraret. Hanc imperator Nerva in gremio Iovis collocarat, cum repente solito maior et augustior advocata contione hominum deorumque te filium sibi, hoc est unicum auxilium fessis rebus, adsumpsit.* Cf. also Dio 68.3.

Nerva took the letter to the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline and offered the laurels to Jupiter, proclaiming his victory among the gathered assembly of gods and men.¹⁵⁴ This was the *ovatio* of Nerva, celebrated after achieving victory over Pannonia. Concomitantly, Nerva declared Trajan as his heir and successor.¹⁵⁵ In fact, it was Pliny himself who was summoned by the senate to deliver a panegyric for Nerva's *ovatio*, namely on behalf of Nerva's public announcement of his successor Trajan, at the time in which he received word of his armies' victory in Pannonia; and, therefore, he was present to document the victory celebration and Nerva's delivery of the Pannonian laurels to Jupiter Capitolinus. This was, indeed, a moment worthy of public memory. And, therefore, I agree with Simon, who was the first to propose that Frieze A of the Cancelleria Reliefs was adapted to document Nerva's victory celebration over Pannonia on the day of Trajan's adoption on the 27th of October 97.¹⁵⁶ Domitian's *ovatio*, which occurred at the Temple of Jupiter after his victory in the Second Pannonian War, provided such a similar scenario to Nerva's *ovatio* during the Third Pannonian War, that it had been decided by the commissioner of the reliefs, likely Nerva himself, to officially reuse Frieze A, altering only the portraits of the emperors. The iconography of Frieze A was well-suited for both the *ovatio* of Domitian and the *ovatio* of Nerva.

Thus, on Frieze A, Nerva is seen approaching Jupiter on the Capitoline hill, with the laurel-bearer Victoria leading the ceremony. Behind Victoria, two young lictors are guarding the emperor from the front. And, as stated by Pliny, "before the gathered assembly of gods and men," comprising Mars, Minerva, Virtus, the Genius Senatus, the Genius Populi Romani, the remaining lictors and Roman soldiers, Nerva sends Victoria to offer his laurels to the omnipotent god, which commemorated not only his Pannonian *ovatio*, but also his proclamation of an heir. Moreover, it appears to be no coincidence that, at

¹⁵⁴ Grainer 2003, 96.

¹⁵⁵ The victory at Pannonia was not Trajan's own; for, he was in on campaign in Germany at the time, cf Plin. *Pan.* 6.4, 8.2; Dio 68.3.4; Bennett 1997, 46. However, Trajan did, eventually, conclude the war during his own principate. Grainger (2003, 96-100) plausibly proposes that the declaration of Trajan as Nerva's successor was already planned in advance between Nerva, Trajan, and the senators.

¹⁵⁶ Simon 1985, 554.



Figure 143: Denarius of Nerva featuring military figure and the emperor on the reverse. Ca. 96-98 CE.

the end of September, Nerva issued a new set of coins, the *PAX AVGUSTI* type, or the emperor's peace type, one of which depicts him clasping hands with either a soldier or perhaps the god Mars himself (or possibly Virtus in Amazonian tunic?), who also plays a role on Relief A (**Fig. 143**).¹⁵⁷ Roman peace and victory were achieved through the martial *virtus* of Nerva's armies, and, by proxy, through the *virtus* of Nerva – the new *virtus Augusti*, illustrated by Virtus, who was no longer affiliated with Domitian, but represents the martial excellence of Rome's new emperor Nerva on Frieze A of the Cancelleria Reliefs.

Nerva abdicated in January of 98 and died a few weeks later.¹⁵⁸ Subsequently, Trajan returned to the Danube in the winter of 98/99 to, presumably, settle an agreement or peace treaty with the Suebi and the Sarmatians; for no further conflict, nor any annexations of land, are known.¹⁵⁹ His attention turned toward the Dacians. Nevertheless, the Third Pannonian War had been mysteriously concluded under the principate of Trajan and the details of the war were swept under the rug. There was not a triumphant military victory for Trajan to celebrate, since this part of the war was most likely settled with a diplomatic agreement. Even if Trajan desired to reuse Frieze A in order to celebrate and publicize a similar Pannonian victory on behalf of the war's conclusion, the paucity of marble remaining on Frieze A would not have sufficed for another recarving of the current portrait of Nerva.

That such a glorious occasion – the *ovatio* of Nerva – would have been memorialized in monumental relief sculpture is probable, especially since his only great military accomplishment was celebrated in conjunction with the acclamation of a great military leader as his heir – Trajan, to whom the *virtus Augusti* would be seamlessly passed. And after Domitian's *damnatio memoriae*, it seems likely that

¹⁵⁷ *BMCRE Nerv.* 61b; *RIC 2² Nerv.* 32; Shotter 1983, 225.

¹⁵⁸ Grainger 2003, 108.

¹⁵⁹ Grainger 2003, 116-7.

the iconography of Relief A provided the perfect analogous event, an *ovatio*, which both Domitian and Nerva celebrated. It would have been most apposite to recarve Domitian into the portrait of Nerva to commemorate Nerva's *ovatio*. Unfortunately, the recarving of Relief A was never completed. Perhaps the sculptors' work on the portrait of Nerva was unacceptable to the emperor, since his head is disproportionate to the rest of his body, which makes him appear diminutive and less important. Or, perhaps Nerva's death in 98 precluded the completion of the project. In any case, before the Cancellaria Reliefs were deconstructed, the reconfiguration of emperors from Domitian to Nerva on Frieze A would have been regarded, at least for a short time, as a consonant transition and would have still remained intelligible to the Roman viewer who saw an *ovatio* of Nerva and no longer an *ovatio* of Domitian.

IV.VII: A Domitianic Relief from Anacapri

Domitian's last victory celebration in Rome, his *ovatio*, celebrated in 93 after his conquest of the Sarmatians during the Second Pannonian War seems to have been the subject of another relief carved in Carrara marble. The figural composition of the so-called Relief from Anacapri appears to be modeled on Frieze A of the Cancellaria Reliefs, perhaps illustrating an abbreviated version of the same subject (**Fig. 144**). Once housed in the Museo della Torre in Anacapri, which no longer exists, the relief is now, unfortunately, lost.¹⁶⁰ However, in 1953, Magi was able to study and photograph the relief – the only



Figure 144: Relief from Anacapri: Minerva, Domitian, lictor, Virtus, soldier, horse, and soldier. Ca. 93-96 CE.

known photograph.¹⁶¹ The relief is considerably smaller than Frieze A, the quality of the sculptural work is not as refined, and the scene is incomplete; however, the identities of the figures

¹⁶⁰ The relief is also not in the Villa San Michele or the Casa Rossa at Anacapri, both of which house a small collection of antiquities. However, Magi reports that it belongs to a private collection of Armando Maresca of Anacapri; and it may still remain hidden in his family's possession.

¹⁶¹ Magi 1954-1955, 49; reproduced by Koeppel (1969, 145).

are clear and the model for the relief – Frieze A of the Cancelleria Reliefs – is certain.¹⁶² The relief portrays a procession of seven figures. At the far left is Minerva, Domitian's patron deity. She is identified by her female physique, her heavily draped chiton, and her canonical Corinthian helmet. She stretches her right arm to the left side of the scene into the lacuna in the same formula as the gesture of Mars on Frieze A. She does not appear to advance forward as she does on Frieze A, but rather stands still. She turns her head toward the right to engage with her protégé Domitian behind her. Domitian is dressed in a cuirass with tunic and a *paludamentum*. He also comes to a halt and stretches out his right arm (hand also missing) just as he does on Relief A, likely gesticulating with a salutation or a sign of reverence for the subject of the lacuna at the left. He carries a scepter, similar to the one carried by the Genius Senatus on Frieze A.¹⁶³ Varner notes that the relief appears to have been vandalized in antiquity and the head of Domitian ruined.¹⁶⁴ That Domitian's head was deliberately destroyed testifies to the systemic annihilation of Domitian's image after the ruling of his *damnatio memoriae* by the senate was officially enacted. Behind Domitian is a heavily draped lictor wearing a mantle clasped at the sternum. He carries *fasces* in his right hand and another unidentifiable object in his left hand.¹⁶⁵

Standing behind the lictor is Virtus.¹⁶⁶ Virtus wears her conventional short Amazonian tunic, belted twice, once at the waist and once below the bosom, which divests her right breast. She also appears to wear a cloak that drapes over her left arm and cascades down her back to her knees. She dons a crested

¹⁶² 76.3cm long, 36.2cm high: Magi 1954-1955, 45; Toynbee 1957, 11.

¹⁶³ Magi 1954-1955, 46. *Contra* Koeppel (1969, 145), who identifies the attribute as a sword; however, swords are typically placed in sheaths which hang at the side, secured by a balteus. Here, the emperor clutches the object, and if it were a sword, the expression would be one of aggression, which is incompatible with the iconography of a semi-divine procession, presumably a victory procession. Moreover, the emperor grabs the object in the same manner as the Genius Senatus grabs his scepter on Frieze A. Therefore, it is more likely that the object is a scepter, as Magi has originally suggested.

¹⁶⁴ Varner 2004, 114.

¹⁶⁵ Toynbee (1957, 11) suggest that the object is an axe. Or, according to Koeppel (1969, 145), the lictor holds *fasces* in the left hand and a rod (Stab) in his right hand. Or, according to Milhous (1992, 285-6), the lictor carries *fasces* in his right hand and a scepter in his left; however, *fasces* are clearly held in the right hand, attested by the presence of the axe head on the body of the *fasces*. Moreover, Milhous identifies the lictor as the god Honos; however, the iconography of both the relief from Anacapri and Frieze A of the Cancelleria Reliefs suggest nothing more than a lictor.

¹⁶⁶ Identified as Virtus by Koeppel (1969, 145) and Milhous (1992, 285); Magi (1954-1955, 46) believes it could be either Virtus or Roma. Identified as Roma by Varner (2004, 114). Toynbee (1957, 11) only calls her an "Amazonian female."

helmet, albeit heavily damaged, and boots.¹⁶⁷ In her left hand, she carries an object, which, to me, is unidentifiable; however, Koeppel and Milhous suggest that the object is a sword.¹⁶⁸ This was, perhaps, meant to be the *parazonium* which Virtus most often carries, suggesting that the sculptor of the relief was more familiar with Virtus' canonical iconography than the Virtus-with-shield motif found on Frieze A. In any case, this iconography that conforms to the conventional iconography of Virtus lends credence to the identification of Virtus on Frieze A of the Cancelleria Reliefs. Virtus does not physically touch the emperor as she does on Frieze A; and this visual deviation can be, again, attributed to the artist's understanding of Virtus' orthodox iconography. Nevertheless, the reason for her attendance is clear. Her image not only validates the martial excellence of the emperor, but her presence in this martial-themed procession conveys to the viewer that Domitian's military actions have been divinely sanctioned by the goddess, whose gift she entrusts to the emperor.

Behind Virtus is another lictor, wearing the same heavily draped mantle clasped at the sternum as the first lictor.¹⁶⁹ Rather than guard the emperor with *fascēs*, the lictor pulls the bridle of a single horse in the procession. The last figure is an unhelmeted Roman soldier, who wears a *lorica segmentata* (plated breastplate), followed by a lacuna obscuring the remaining section of the overall composition.¹⁷⁰ Toynbee and Koeppel argue that the scene depicts a *profectio*, just as they both argue for a *profectio* on Frieze A.¹⁷¹ Their hypothesis is founded on the assumption that this horse represents the one which the emperor rides on his departure from Rome to go to war in a foreign land. It is true that a horse is featured in scenes that depict a *profectio* on Roman coins – our only unequivocal evidence for the iconography of a *profectio* – but only beginning with the reign of Trajan, not of Domitian, and only common with Trajan, Marcus

¹⁶⁷ Toynbee (1957, 11) proposes that the helmet is of the Attic type.

¹⁶⁸ Koeppel 1969, 145; Milhous 1992, 286.

¹⁶⁹ *Contra* Koeppel (1969, 145), who identifies him as a soldier.

¹⁷⁰ Magi 1954-1955, 47; Toynbee 1957, 11.

¹⁷¹ Toynbee 1957, 11; Koeppel 1969, 145-6; cf. also Koeppel (1969, 138-44) for his hypothesis on a *profectio* for Frieze A.



Figure 145: Aureus of Trajan featuring a *profectio* on the reverse. Ca. 112-117 CE.

Aurelius, and the Severans.¹⁷² However, there are fundamental differences in the iconography of a *profectio* on 2nd- and 3rd- century coinage that obviate a *profectio* theory for the Anacapri Relief. On the reverse of an aureus of Trajan, minted sometime between 112 and 117, Trajan departs from Rome on a horse, accompanied by three soldiers, during a *profectio* (the legend *PREFECTIO AVG* is found in the exergue)

(Fig. 145).¹⁷³ Trajan is dressed in a cuirass, military tunic, and a *paludamentum* and he carries a spear in his right hand. The three soldiers who accompany Trajan are fully armed, wearing crested helmets, cuirasses, military tunics, and *paludamenta*. They all carry spears and the soldier to the right carries a shield. If Domitian were to be setting out on campaign on both the Anacapri Relief and Frieze A, then we would expect certain iconographical details that would clearly convey the visual message of *profectio* to the people of Rome, namely that Domitian would be mounted on a horse, likely holding a spear, and his entourage of Roman soldiers would be fully armored, including wearing their helmets.¹⁷⁴ And, *Virtus* would not be present during a *profectio*, since her divine presence represents her gift gained on the battlefield only after victory had been procured.



Figure 146: Silver medallion of Trajan featuring an *adventus* on the reverse. 106/7 CE.

Moreover, a depiction of a horse does not necessitate a *profectio*. Sometime in 106/7, silver medallions were minted to celebrate the *adventus* of Trajan (Fig. 146). Trajan, dressed in a cuirass and *paludamentum* and carrying a spear enters the city on horseback. Behind him are three soldiers, fully armored. Preceding the emperor is the goddess *Felicitas*, dressed in a chiton and himation and carrying a cornucopia and

¹⁷² The “Profectio of Marcus Aurelius” on the Arch of Constantine cannot be used as comparanda because there is no certainty that this relief depicts a *profectio*. And even if it does depict a *profectio*, the iconography is too dissimilar to use it as evidence for a *profectio* on the Anacapri Relief; cf. also Magi (1954-1955, 50-4) on the matter.

¹⁷³ *BMCRE Traj.* 511-2, 532, 1014; *RIC 2² Traj.* 263, 297, 314, 633, 662.

¹⁷⁴ Hölscher 2009, 57.

caduceus.¹⁷⁵ The legend *ADVENTVS AVG* above the emperor substantiates that the emperor approaches the city during an *adventus* on horseback.

I do, nevertheless, agree that the horse on the Anacapri Relief belongs to the emperor. However, it is not the horse Domitian will ride out to war, but rather the horse that has returned him to Rome. The direction in movement of the iconography matters. On the Anacapri Relief, Domitian pays no attention to the horse, namely because he has already dismounted. His focus is, rather, on the subject ahead. Just as Frieze A of the Cancelleria Reliefs depicts Domitian's return to Rome from Pannonia, so, too, does the Anacapri Relief. If anything, the visual narrative of the Anacapri Relief is one of a *reditus*, or as Magi had originally interpreted, an *adventus*, followed by Hölscher.¹⁷⁶ However, the attendance of the goddess Virtus renders the scene not only a return from war, but also a victory scene. And it is likely that Victoria decorated the lacuna to the left-hand side of the scene, and, perhaps even Jupiter, to whom Domitian gesticulates in reverence. Because the model of this non-official state relief must be Cancelleria Relief A, similar to the way in which the Boscoreale Cups likely illustrate state-commissioned reliefs viewed in the capital, then it is not inconceivable to postulate that the Anacapri Relief also depicts the *ovatio* of Domitian. The Anacapri Relief commemorates the emperor's last military victory before his death. The visual presence of Virtus was integral to Domitian's ideological agenda of military glory; and her image near or next to the emperor solidified his relationship with the goddess Virtus, with the hope that her public recognition would promote his reputation in martial superiority, guiding him toward eternal memory. And the fact that Cancelleria Relief A was being used as a template for smaller-scale reliefs suggests that Domitian's martial valor was being recognized, or else Virtus may have been replaced with another divinity. Unfortunately, Domitian seemed to have felt insecure about his martial reputation and engineered a massive, unprovoked invasion of Pannonia in 96. His opportunity to maintain his martial

¹⁷⁵ Grueber 1874, 2, no. 1 and pl. 1, no 3; Brilliant 1963, 111; fig. 3.16 on pg. 110; Hölscher 1967, 56, no. 328.

¹⁷⁶ Magi 1954-1955, 47-54. Hölscher 2009, 57.

virtus and secure the military glory that he so long desired since he was a boy, living in the shadows of his father's and brother's martial renown, ultimately dissipated with his assassination. Subsequently, the senate decreed a *damnatio memoriae* and his images on Cancelleria Frieze A and the Anacapri Relief were eradicated, leaving him back to where he began, bereft of *virtus*.

Chapter V: The Goddess Virtus and the Adoptive Emperors

V.I: The *Virtus Augusti* of Trajan

It is no great wonder why Nerva adopted Trajan as his heir on the day of Nerva's *ovatio*, celebrating his victory in Domitian's Third Pannonian War. For Trajan was himself a man of *virtus*; and Nerva knew that passing the crown to a military leader with a legitimate martial reputation would maintain the *pax Augusti* in Rome. Trajan's political and military career comprises several offices in his youth, including tribune in Syria and Germany, quaestor, and praetor before the age of 35.¹ In 86-9, Trajan was installed as legionary commander of the *Legio VII Gemina* in Spain by Domitian, but was recalled to the Rhine region to initiate an assault on Saturninus during his revolt against the emperor in January of 89, signaling his loyalty to the emperor; and, in return, Trajan was assigned an *expeditio*, entrusting him with a larger role in Domitian's First Pannonian War.² In 91, Trajan was elected *consul ordinarius*; and by 93, Trajan became governor of Pannonia, likely granted for his military performance in Domitian's Pannonian Wars.³ Thus, Trajan evidently possessed the reputation as a *vir militaris* by the day of his formal adoption by Nerva and by the day he became emperor of Rome 15 months later. Even though Trajan had a validated military career upon his accession to the throne in 98, he still did not possess the right to claim *virtus* as an imperial virtue until he resolved to wage his own defensive war against those who threatened the safety and security of Rome. *Virtus* still needed to be earned, and it was not until the conclusion of his war against the Dacians that *virtus* became an imperial virtue of Trajan, substantiated by the coinage he began to strike after his victory over Dacia, the issues of which were emblazoned with the image of the goddess Virtus, testifying to the emperor's *virtus Augusti*.

¹ Tribune cf. Plin. *Pan* 15.1-3; Bennett 1997, 22-5.

² *Expeditio*, cf. Plin. *Pan*. 14.5; Bennett 1997, 30, 43.

³ Jones 1992, 152; Bennett 1997, 45, cf. also Dio 68.3.

Trajan's war against the Dacians was considered a legitimate and necessary war, unlike Domitian's Germanic wars, many of which were considered gratuitous and belligerent, incited only to elicit the *virtus* he desired to acquire military glory.⁴ However, unlike Domitian, Trajan already possessed martial competency. Yet, as the emperor of Rome, he still needed to prove his *virtus*, without which his principate would never be able to rank among the principates of Augustus, Tiberius, Claudius, Vespasian, and Titus, whose political and military successes were predicated on their *virtus Augusti*. Just like Domitian, Trajan recognized that the *virtus Augusti* necessitated a great foreign victory over a foreign people; and not over a people that had already been subjugated by Rome's commanders-in-chief, namely Egypt, Germany, Britain, Judaea, and Domitian's failed attempt to conquer Pannonia. The *virtus Augusti* needed to originate from a foreign country in which a barbarian people threatened the peace, prosperity, and existence of Rome. And the Dacians, biding their time and strengthening their military forces since their armistice between their king, Decebalus, and Domitian in 89, began to infringe on Roman territory along the Danube, justifying Trajan's war against the Dacians to restore Rome's hegemony in her northern provinces and legitimizing the *virtus Augusti* he acquired in conquering the Dacians.⁵

On the 12th of May, 113, a 100-foot column sculpted with Trajan's entire Dacian campaign was dedicated to the emperor and erected in the Forum of Trajan behind the Basilica Ulpia. The visual record of Trajan's campaign authenticates his *virtus Augusti*. Not only do the friezes of the column narrate the superiority of Rome's armies at the command of Trajan, but the intense battles against the Dacians also underscore the *virtus* of the Dacians, thereby aggrandizing his own reputation in *virtus militaris* by visually magnifying the gravity of an arduous war against Rome's formidable foes. This is analogous to the way in which Caesar dignified the *virtus* of the Gauls so as to amplify his own *virtus* throughout *de Bello Gallico*. The Column of Trajan was Trajan's *de Bello Gallico*. By demonstrating the *virtus* of the Dacians, the column

⁴ Dio 68.6.

⁵ For the war, see Dio 68.6-10, 14-5. For a succinct analysis of Trajan's war against Dacia, cf. Bennett 1997, 85-103.

reminded the Roman viewer of the dangers which the Dacians brought to Rome. Not only does the column justify Trajan's war against the Dacians, but it validates his *virtus Augusti*, which secures the peace in Rome and amplifies the emperor's reputation, respectability, and reverence. There is no image of Virtus on the Column of Trajan, nor should we expect there to be one, since the column records the history of the wars during Trajan's campaigns before his return to Rome and before he publicly celebrated his victory with a triumph, *ovatio*, or *adventus*, none of which are commemorated on the monument. Nevertheless, upon his return to Rome in December of 102, Trajan celebrated a triumph and was conferred the title *Dacicus*, "the Conqueror of Dacia."⁶ And beginning in 103, during Trajan's fifth consulship, he began to mint coins featuring themes of victory, including many issues for the goddess Virtus, whose image was now licensed for him to use.



Figure 147: Denarius of Trajan featuring Virtus on the reverse. Trajanic period.

The issues of Virtus coins struck by Trajan are iconographically consistent with the status quo. It seems that Trajan had no need to remodel the canonical image of Virtus as Domitian and Galba did before him. On the reverse, Virtus faces right and is positioned in a *Standmotiv*. (Fig. 147).⁷ She dons a crested helmet and wears her conventional short Amazonian tunic that unveils her right breast. The tunic is double-belted, once at the breast and again around her waist, comparable to the tunic which Virtus wears on Frieze A of the Cancelleria Reliefs. The goddess carries a *parazonium* in the crook of her left arm and wields a reverse spear in her right hand. She wears high boots, ornamented at the cuff, likely representative of her pelt boots. She also rests her left foot on a helmet, symbolizing the conquest of Rome's adversaries, the Dacians.

⁶ Dio 68.10; Bennett 1997, 96.

⁷ BMCRE Traj. 229-235; 444, 517b, 600-1, 631-3; RIC 2² Traj. 202-4, 268, 288-9, 334, 353-5. Legend: S P Q R OPTIMO PRINCIPI.



Figure 148: Aureus of Trajan featuring Trajan and Victoria on the reverse. 101/2 CE.



Figure 149: Sestertius of Trajan featuring Trajan and the Tigris and Euphrates on the reverse. 116/7 CE.

Moreover, the ideological connection between Trajan and Virtus is emphasized by another series, which illustrates Trajan taking on the iconographical role of Virtus. On the reverse of an aureus minted in 101/2, Victoria crowns Trajan, who is standing in the *Virtus Standmotiv* (Fig. 148).⁸ He carries a *parazonium* in the crook of his left arm and wields a reverse spear in his right hand just like Virtus. And on a sestertius struck toward the end of his reign in 116/7, Trajan assumes the image of Virtus once again, with *Standmotiv*, *parazonium*, and reverse spear; however, this time he stands over two personifications of the Tigris and Euphrates and the personifications of Armenia and Mesopotamia, signifying that his *virtus* is superior to that of these subjugated nations (Fig. 149).⁹ Trajan is now the fourth emperor to visually identify himself with the iconography of Virtus, following Galba, Vespasian (or Titus), and

Domitian, underscoring the importance of *virtus* as a cardinal virtue of the emperor.

V.II: The Arch of Trajan at Beneventum

Although Trajan never triumphed over Armenia or Mesopotamia, he did triumph over Dacia twice, once in 102 and, again, in 107. Dio is silent on the details of Trajan's triumphs; however, for the triumph in 107, he states that the victory celebrations lasted for 123 days, during which various barbarian embassies and exotic animals came to Rome.¹⁰ This is the triumph believed to be illustrated on the Arch of Trajan at Beneventum, dedicated to Trajan by the people of Beneventum between 114 and 117.¹¹ The

⁸ *BMCRE Traj.* 131-4, 154, 236-41; *RIC 2² Traj.* 69, 85, 212-3,

⁹ *BMCRE Traj.* 1033-42.

¹⁰ Dio 68.15.

¹¹ Bennett 1997, 206. For a thorough study of the entire monument with detailed photos, cf. Rotili 1972; cf. also De Maria 123-3. For more detailed photos, cf. Pietrangeli, C. 1946. *L'arco di Traiano a Benevento*. Documentario Athenaeum Fotografico. As a commemorative arch rather than a triumphal arch, cf. Beard 2007, 47.

attic triumphal procession circumnavigates the entire arch in a continuous motion toward the right. The procession comprises the triumphal car, lictors, soldiers, displays of Dacian prisoners, and *spolia*, a parade of animals for the triumphal sacrifice, musicians, *tabulae* depicting events from the Dacian War, and the goddess Virtus. Ryberg posits that the procession begins at the northwest corner and ends at the starting point of the *pompa*, where the *triumphator* in chariot is about to pass through a triumphal arch depicted at the far right (**Fig. 150**).¹² A defaced Trajan rides in his triumphal car and carries an eagle-tipped scepter. Victoria, also defaced, rides in the car behind Trajan and holds a laurel branch in her left hand. She crowns the emperor with her right hand. Trajan is escorted by the *equites*, soldiers, and lictors with laureate *fascies*. The guide of the triumphal quadriga is none other than Virtus.¹³ Virtus' helmet and face seem to have been deliberately removed in antiquity, just like the faces of Trajan and Victoria, attesting to the divine providence of this figure; however, several details in her iconography secure her identity. Her helmet, right arm, left hand, and left leg are missing; however, the figure is bosomed and wears a short Amazonian tunic, double-belted, once below the breast and again at the waist, just like the Virtus from



Figure 150: The Arch of Trajan at Benevento: Detail of the continuous relief depicting Trajan's triumphal procession. Ca. 114-117 CE.

¹² Ryberg 1955, 150-1.

¹³ See Milhous (1992, 292) for an exhaustive bibliography on the Arch of Trajan; Ryberg 1955, 153; Kähler (1960, 261) calls the deity "Roma."

Trajan's Virtus coinage. She may have also worn a cloak or *paludamentum*, attested by the extra cloth on her left shoulder and forearm. Ryberg has also identified a partial shaft of either a *vexillum* or spear behind her left shoulder.¹⁴ The breaks around the reins of the horses, as well as the position of her right arm, confirm that she pulls the reins of the horses and guides the emperor through the triumphal arch, at the right possibly meant to be the Porta Triumphalis.¹⁵ Although she advances to the right, she turns her head back to the left in order to gaze upon the emperor, accentuating the relationship between the emperor and Virtus. The Virtus-as-guide motif is now an ideological formula for scenes depicting the emperor's triumph, emphasizing his two greatest virtues gained in the theatre of war: *victoria* and *virtus*. The template for this visual formula is clearly the Triumphator Relief on the Arch of Titus in which Victoria crowns Titus and Virtus guides the emperor forward; and, again, replicated on the Vatican Relief. However, this composition first appeared on the Medinaceli Reliefs, the Triumph Relief of which illustrates Augustus in a quadriga led by Virtus. And it is likely that this visual composition of the coupling of the *triumphator* and Virtus was, originally, connected to Augustus, perhaps on one of the lost internal friezes of the Ara Pacis, hence the continuity of the scene among his successors. Nevertheless, the ideological message is clear: victory was the result of *virtus*. Virtus not only symbolizes Trajan's inherent virtue of military excellence, but her animated presence in the scene indicates that the divinity herself has endorsed Trajan's victory, legitimizing his *virtus*. Virtus has willingly chosen to carry the emperor and his "Victory" through the gates of the city, as if it were an *adventus*, and, likely, concluding at the Temple of Jupiter where Trajan will have deposited the victory laurels. Although the scene would have been difficult to discern with the naked eye from the ground, the lack of visibility does not preclude the fact that Virtus

¹⁴ Ryberg 1955, 153.

¹⁵ Ryberg 1955, 150; Kähler 1960, 261.

At the center of the soffit of the arch is a relief depicting Victoria crowning Trajan, similar to the iconography of the aureus above (**Fig. 151**). Trajan, again, assumes the iconography of Virtus. The emperor is positioned in a *Standmotiv* and is dressed in a cuirass and a *paludamentum*. He holds a spear in his right hand (now lost) and likely once a *parazonium* in his left hand. The relief is also framed by a panoply of strewn arms and weapons, most certainly allegorizing the conquest of

¹⁶ Hannestad 1986, 181.

V.III: The Great Trajanic Frieze

The largest and most monumental sculptural frieze in the city of Rome illustrating a continuous narrative of triumph and victory is the Great Trajanic Frieze, on which Virtus makes her unequivocal debut in a Roman *adventus* composition. The greater part of the sculptural frieze is forever lost. And whichever monument these Trajanic reliefs originally adorned is conjectural; however, there seems to be a scholarly consensus that they originated from within the greater precinct of the Forum of Trajan and were sculpted around the same time as the erection of the Column of Trajan.¹⁷ Four panels were deliberately removed from their original location and appropriated to form the sculptural friezes of the Arch of Constantine's outer east and west faces of the attic and the central bay, the east pylon of which depicts the *adventus* of Trajan after his Dacian campaigns. The Adventus Relief, comprising two slabs, contains two overlapping narratives framed within a larger continuous frieze: a battle against the Dacians to the right and the arrival of Trajan into the city of Rome in celebration of his martial victory (**Fig. 152**).¹⁸

Trajan, whose portrait was recut into the likeness of Constantine, faces left and is positioned in a *Standmotiv* in the middle of the first slab. He wears a cuirass, belted high on the waist (*Feldherrbindel*), a military tunic with ornamented *pteryges*, a *paludamentum*, and pelt boots.¹⁹ Unfortunately, his two forearms are broken off; however, the horizontal break of his right arm is indicative of its outward projection, likely signaling with a gesture of salutation or reverence, comparable to the gesture given by Domitian on Cancelleria Frieze A and, again, on the Anacapri Relief.²⁰ Touati has demonstrated that the

¹⁷ Touati 1987, 85-6, 91-5; for an exhaustive bibliography of the frieze, cf. Milhous 1992, 295-6. Kähler (1960, 265) suggests that the *adventus* here may have occurred between the two Dacian Wars, during which Trajan celebrated his first triumph over the Dacians.

¹⁸ For the identification of the scene as an *adventus*, cf. Pallottino, M. 1938. *Il Grande Fregio I Traiano*. Studi e Materiali del Museo dell'Impero Romano I. Roma, pg. 30; Hamberg 1945, 56-63; Brilliant 1963, 111-2; Koeppel 1969, 158-161; Hannestad 1986, 168-7; Touati 1987, 14-16; Kleiner 1992, 221; Milhous 1992, 296-8,

¹⁹ Touati 1987, 42-3.

²⁰ Touati (1987, 14) suggests power and/or salutation. Brilliant (1963, 112) believes that the gesture associates Trajan and "Roma" in a visual union. However, Trajan's arm originally overlapped the body of the goddess, thus, indicating that the recipient was behind the break.



Figure 152: Great Trajanic Frieze: Adventus of Trajan. Ca. 113-117.

original frieze continued beyond the current break; thus, the recipient of Trajan's gesture of reverence appeared beyond the break, most likely a divine presence.²¹ He once held a long, rod-like object in his left hand, the break which is evidenced on his left shoulder, probably a spear.²² Behind the commander-in-chief is an entourage of Roman soldiers, un-helmeted and carrying spears, *fascēs*, and *vexilla*.

To the right of Trajan is Victoria, who alights on the ground, toes barely touching the earth, as she places the victory crown upon Trajan's head. To the left of Trajan is Virtus, who reprises her ideological role as herald of the emperor in victory scenes. Virtus guides the emperor toward the arch behind her, analogous to the way in which Virtus directed the triumphal quadriga of the emperor to the Porta Triumphalis on the Arch of Trajan at Beneventum. And, perhaps, here, too, Virtus leads the emperor through the Porta Triumphalis, portending his victory celebration to come upon his *adventus* to Rome.

²¹ Touati 1997, 16.

²² Touati (1987, 14). Milhous (1992 298) suggests scepter; however, the coinage of Trajan above, as well as the vault relief from the Arch of Trajan at Beneventum, suggests spear.

She wears her traditional pelt boots and short Amazonian tunic, belted at the waist, that reveals her right breast. She also wears a mantle, clasped at the left shoulder, that drapes over her left arm. She dons a helmet with a large crest, supported by a sphinx. Her long hair flows past her shoulder to her back. In her left hand, she grips the hilt of her *parazonium*; and, her right hand is lost, although the position of the arm suggests that she held a spear, or, perhaps, a standard, or *vexillum*. Even though the composition of the scene hints at movement toward the left, both Trajan and Virtus pause before the gate. Virtus turns her head to gaze back upon the emperor, just as she gazes back on Augustus on the Medinaceli Reliefs, on Titus on the Arch of Titus, on the emperor of the Vatican Relief, and on Trajan on the Arch of Trajan at Beneventum. Her gaze upon the emperor stresses not only the ideological relationship the goddess shares with the emperor of Rome, but also that Virtus is in such a relationship solely with the Roman emperor. For no one else has been graced with her divine presence; and the sculptural harmony and visual balance between Virtus and Trajan, who mirror one another on the frieze, reinforces Trajan's supremacy in *virtus*, gifted by the goddess whose companionship he earned on the battlefield.

Moreover, although it has been argued that the *fascēs*-bearing youth positioned between Virtus and Trajan, sculpted in low-relief in the background, is the god Honos, here, Virtus is visually paired with both the emperor and Victoria in the foreground.²³ This ideological triad represents an imperial motif that visually expresses the cause and effect of the emperor's martial excellence. The presence of Virtus not only invites the viewer to reflect on the emperor's military experience, but her appearance in the *adventus* demonstrates the reason for the emperor's military success, exemplified by Victoria. The ongoing war transpiring on the right-hand side of Adventus Relief and in other sections of the extended frieze,

²³ The youth does wear similar pelt boots to the pairs worn by Virtus and the emperor; however, Honos is not known to carry *fascēs*. However, Virtues are known to carry a multitude of attributes, so *fascēs* do not necessarily preclude the identification of the youth as Honos. For Honos, cf. Touati 1987, 15-6; Milhous 1992, 297-8.



Figure 153: Great Trajanic Frieze: detail of Trajan conquering the Dacians. Ca. 113-117 CE.

particularly the episode on the west pylon, in which the emperor on horseback overpowers the intimidated Dacians under the hooves of his steed, is powerful, violent, and emotional (**Fig. 153**). The visual polarity between battle and victory magnifies the emperor's capacity in *virtus* in valorously overcoming such an impressive barbarian adversary, now bereft of their *virtus* – a feat which could not be done without the emperor's intrinsic *virtus*, his *virtus Augusti*. This may very well have been the decisive moment in which Trajan earned his *virtus Augusti* on the battlefield, the moment in which Virtus sided with the Romans. And it is the divine presence of the *virtus Augusti* which relays to the people a message of the emperor's capability and strength as a leader. For the people of Rome, the image of Virtus represents a guarantee that they are in good hands, living under an emperor who can secure the borders of Rome, afford peace, and maintain stability. And for the emperor, the image of Virtus constitutes martial glory, which will contribute to the overall political and military reputation of his principate, with the hope that, one day, his *virtus* will guide him beyond the gates of the city and beyond the borders of Rome to rest among the divine in perpetuity. And, indeed, his *virtus* survived his death; the *virtus* of Trajan was exalted in the late-3rd century/early-4th century by the writer of the *Historia Augusta*, as it was compared to the martial valor of Victorinus.²⁴

V.IV: Virtus and Four Triumphal Sacrifices

During the time in which the Column of Trajan was completed, ca. 112-114, Trajan minted a very idiosyncratic series of sestertii featuring the goddess Virtus paired with the goddess Felicitas (**Fig. 154**).²⁵ Virtus stands on the left, facing right towards Felicitas. The legend reads *VIRTVTI ET FELICITATI* in the

²⁴ *HA Tyr. Trig.* 6.6.

²⁵ *BMCRE Traj.* 968d; *RIC 2nd Traj.* 268; Strack 1931, 175-76, pl. 8.440.



Figure 154: Sestertius of Trajan featuring Virtus and Felicitas on the reverse. Ca. 112-114 CE.

dative case. Virtus is replicated from Trajan's previous Virtus coin types without deviation. She wears a double-belted tunic that bares her right breast, a crested helmet, and boots. She wields a reverse spear and brandishes a *parazonium* in her left hand. Felicitas wears a heavily draped chiton and himation and a diadem. She carries a caduceus in her right hand and cradles a cornucopia in her left hand. The coupling of Virtus and Felicitas is unknown in any other principate, rendering this

divine pair uniquely Trajanic. Here, Virtus is conceptualized as a statue, attested by her *Standmotiv*, her reverse spear, and her foot on a helmet. Therefore, Felicitas must also be a visual transcription of a statue type. Thus, it is probable that Trajan was associated with this statue group, perhaps commissioned for Trajan after all of his success in the Dacian Wars. Virtus clearly represents the emperor's military excellence in the Dacian campaigns, whereas Felicitas epitomizes the luck, happiness, and good fortune predicated on the emperor's *virtus Augusti*.

Furthermore, *felicitas* had long been associated with *virtus*, victory, and triumph.²⁶ As discussed above, Hannibal decried the fact that his forefathers had yielded to Rome, but that it was his turn to make Rome yield to his *felicitas* and to his *virtus*, according to Livy.²⁷ And according to Cicero, the ideal *imperator* (in his case, Pompey) needed to possess knowledge in military matters, authority, *virtus*, and *felicitas*.²⁸ Similarly, Livy states that victory was achievable through auspices, *imperium*, leadership, and *felicitas* (*felicitate*).²⁹ We also cannot forget that Pompey dedicated a shrine to Venus Victrix, Honos, Virtus, Felicitas, and Victoria in the *ima cavea* of his theatre.³⁰ More recently, Trajan minted medallions in 106/7 to celebrate his *adventus* from the Dacian Wars, in which he enters the city on horseback, who is preceded

²⁶ Versnel 1970, 364.

²⁷ Livy 22.58.

²⁸ Cic. *Manil.* 28.

²⁹ Livy 40.52.

³⁰ *Fasti Amiternini* for the 12th of August.



Figure 155: Villa Albani Relief featuring Trajan, Felicitas (?), and Virtus. Trajanic period.



Figure 156: Mid-16th century drawing of the Villa Albani Relief by Dozio.

by the goddess Felicitas (**Fig. 146**).³¹ Thus, *felicitas* is just as much of a martial quality as *virtus*; and the image of Felicitas is found within the visual milieu of victory and triumph just like Virtus.³² Therefore, the iconography of the coin featuring Virtus and Felicitas together, albeit uniquely Trajanic, invokes the victory and triumph of Trajan over the conquest of Dacia.

A restored relief currently housed in the Villa Albani in Rome depicts an emperor and two goddesses standing by his side (**Fig. 155**). The

togate emperor is almost fully reconstructed. Only the torso, left shoulder, and left arm are original, attested by a mid-16th century drawing by Dozio (**Fig. 156**).³³ Although the emperor has been reconstructed as a seated *togatus* on a *sella curulis*, he was, in fact, standing. Milhous postulates that the emperor was originally distributing money or grain.³⁴ The *alimentaria*, a welfare program instituted by Trajan, would have been an appropriate scene for this relief, since Trajan's *alimentaria* is also the subject of several of the reliefs from the Arch of Trajan at

³¹ Grueber, HA. 1874. *Roman Medallions in the British Museum*. British Museum, London, pg. 2, no. 1 and pl. 1, no 3; Brilliant 1963, 111; fig. 3.16 on pg. 110.

³² Cf. also Versnel (1970, 360-71) for the importance of *felicitas* in relation to the Roman triumph.

³³ Vermeule 1996, 40, also figs. 146, 146a.

³⁴ Milhous 1992, 287.

Beneventum.³⁵ The female goddess at the right is wearing a double-belted Amazonian tunic that reveals her right breast, a cloak that is pinned to her left shoulder and cascades across her left arm and down her side, and pelt boots. She also bears a balteus strapped around her right shoulder that stretches to her left hip. The head appears to be restored, as well as the tripod behind the goddess. Koeppel suggests that a helmeted female figure would be more appropriate to the rest of the iconography of the goddess.³⁶ The goddess in the middle wears a heavily draped chiton and himation, belted at the waist. Only her head and attribute are restored; however, remnants of her original attributes demonstrating a curve are indicative of a cornucopia as her original attribute.³⁷ Koeppel suggests that she could be Abundantia, Felicitas, or Fortuna.³⁸ However, Milhous, who I believe is correct, proposes that the pair of goddesses are Felicitas and Virtus, the coupling of which is celebrated in the coinage of Trajan.³⁹

Therefore, it is possible that both Virtus and Felicitas take part in an *alimentaria* scene conducted by Trajan. In this case, Virtus and Felicitas visualize the reasons that made the *alimentaria* possible. Because of the emperor's *virtus*, good fortune has manifested itself for the aid of the people, who can reap the benefits of the emperor's *alimentaria* program. However, I remain skeptical, since there are no surviving comparanda that would lend credence to an *alimentaria* attended by the goddess Virtus. And the *alimentaria* scene on the Arch of Trajan does not depict Virtus as a divine attendee. Moreover, Virtus is always depicted in some sort of victory setting; and Milhous' suggestion of an *alimentaria* scene, although a valid conjecture, is unsatisfying in regards to Virtus' immutable relationship with victory and triumph. There is better evidence to support my hypothesis that this scene was originally sacrificial in nature, perhaps a libation conducted by Trajan to celebrate his victory and triumph over the Dacians. In

³⁵ It is possible that Nerva was the originator of the *alimentaria*, according to the 4th-century writer Aurelius Victor (*Epit. de Caes.* 12.4), although there is no other evidence supporting this claim. In any case, the *alimentaria* became a political staple of Trajan's civil agenda.

³⁶ Koeppel 1985, 158; cf. als Milhous 1992, 288.

³⁷ Milhous 1992, 288.

³⁸ Koeppel 1985, 160.

³⁹ Milhous 1992, 288.

any case, the rewards provided by the *virtus Augusti* are still the same, namely peace, prosperity, and abundance, guaranteed by the martial capacity of the Roman emperor. Nevertheless, this relief demonstrates that Virtus is no longer relegated to direct scenes of triumph or *adventus*, as her image is now open to events made possible by the emperor's military victories, namely triumphal sacrifices.⁴⁰



Figure 157: Trajanic Relief in the Louvre depicting the emperor, Felicitas (?), and Virtus. Trajanic period.

A similar relief is now housed in the Louvre, depicting a togate emperor and two female divinities, although vestiges of several other figures are perceived around the edges and behind the three figures in the foreground (Fig. 157). Unfortunately, the heads of all three figures are lost; however, some observations on the iconography and

context can be made to identify the figures. The togate emperor, wearing *calcei senatorii* and once *capite velato*, likely poured a libation from a *patera*, suggested by the position of his arm and bend at the elbow.⁴¹ To his right is a female goddess, *capite velato*, wearing a heavily draped chiton and himation, belted at the waist. None of her attributes survive. The goddess to the right is wearing a double-belted Amazonian tunic that bears her right breast, a mantle that drapes over her left arm, and lion-pelt boots. A balteus hangs over her left shoulder and her right hands grasps the hilt of the *parazonium*.⁴² The goddess is so analogous to the Virtus on the relief above that her identity as Virtus should not be rejected. Her

⁴⁰ On triumphal sacrifices, see Ryberg 1955.

⁴¹ Koeppel 1985, 162; Milhous 1992, 289.

⁴² Koeppel 1985, 163; Milhous 1992, 289.

identification as Virtus would also lend credence to a Felicitas identification for the central goddess.⁴³ Moreover, there is a figure behind Felicitas and Virtus, indicated by the drapery sculpted in low relief that covers the left shoulder of the figure. Koeppel suggests that the figure could be the Genius Populi Romani or Honos.⁴⁴ Since the Genius Populi Romani is never paired with Roma, it is more likely that the figure is Honos. Although we do not know the context of the sacrificial libation and because the sacrifice is attended by a panoply of gods and goddesses, a triumphal sacrifice should be considered, in which the attendance of Virtus would not be unexpected. Thus, Felicitas, Virtus, and, perhaps, Honos participate in the emperor's sacrificial libation. Because Virtus only attends imperial events after the emperor achieves victory in warfare, a triumphal sacrifice would be conceivable for the subject of the relief.

A third fragmentary relief, now housed in the Louvre (although not on public display), illustrates a triumphal sacrifice, attended by four divinities, demonstrating another Trajanic tendency to experiment with new motifs, according to Ryberg (**Fig. 158**).⁴⁵ The goddess at the left is heavily draped in a chiton and himation. Her head has been deliberately smashed, but she carries a cornucopia as an identifiable attribute. The goddess to her right is wearing an Amazonian tunic that divests her right breast, a long mantle that drapes over her left arm, and pelt boots. Her head was also deliberately defaced, but vestiges of her helmet and crest remain. A balteus is slung over her right shoulder which carries a *parazonium*, the hilt of which she clenches in her left hand. The togate male to the right of the Amazon carries no identifying attribute; however, he grasps the wing of Victoria with his right hand, indicating that he is no mortal, but rather divine. Victoria gracefully maneuvers to the right of the scene; and below her left leg is the head of an ox, testifying to the triumphal sacrifice as the subject of the composition. Ryberg identifies the divinities as Abundantia (?), Roma, a togatus, and Victoria; and Koeppel identifies them as Abundantia

⁴³ The central goddess could also be Fortuna, who is also grouped with Virtus in scenes of victory, e.g. the Aurelian Adventus Panel Relief.

⁴⁴ Koeppel 1985, 163.

⁴⁵ Ryberg 1955, 156; Koeppel (1986, 8-9) dates the relief to no later than the Hadrianic/Antonine period. However, the coupling of Felicitas and Virtus iconographically points to a Trajanic date.



Figure 158: Trajanic Relief from the Louvre depicting Felicitas, Virtus, Honos, Victoria and sacrificial animal. Trajanic period.

(?) or Fortuna (?), Virtus or Roma, a togatus, and Victoria.⁴⁶ However, Milhous, I believe correctly, identifies the gods as Felicitas, Virtus, Honos(?), and Victoria.⁴⁷ The pairing of Felicitas and Virtus in Trajanic coinage strongly supports the identification of the two goddesses at the left as Felicitas and Virtus, respectively, who, together, became a Trajanic paradigm. Moreover, if Milhous is correct in identifying the togatus as Honos – who,

as Milhous has demonstrated, can be togate – then his presence lends credence to the identification of Virtus. And the presence of Virtus next to Victoria underscores the martial implications of this sacrifice, thereby indicating a triumphal sacrifice conducted by or for the *triumphator*, Trajan.

Could Roma attend a triumphal sacrifice? Perhaps; however, Roma never gets grouped with other divine virtues of the emperor. She has, so far, been contextually isolated or coupled only with the emperor, and only as a seated matron, never as an active member in imperial scenes, especially in victory scenes. Roma is not a personal quality of the emperor – something which he earned and claimed as his own. Therefore, in episodes that are populated with the emperor's inherent characteristics as divine Virtues, Roma would be an anomaly. She was not something which the emperor was proactively trying to promote. The recognition of Roma by the public was not going to bring the emperor closer to achieving

⁴⁶ Ryberg 1955, 156; Koeppel. 1986, 46-7.

⁴⁷ Milhous 1992, 306-7.

renown, glory, and apotheosis. However, divine qualities that affirm the worth of the emperor to the world would, such as Felicitas, Virtus, Honos, and Victoria, who, together, represent the identity of the emperor. Trajan also seemed to have an affinity for Virtus and Felicitas, the coupling of which lends credence to a Virtus identity for the Amazon goddess depicted in these three Trajanic reliefs. The sestertius featuring Virtus and Felicitas identifies the two goddesses in the dative, “to/for Virtus and Felicitas,” suggesting that the series was issued as a thank-offering to the pair of goddesses. In this case, Trajan may be showing reverence to the goddess whose martial gift made his victory over of the Dacians possible, as well as to the goddess whose gift will benefit the welfare of the people living under Trajan’s hegemony – a promise disclosed by the circulation of his Virtus and Felicitas coins. As for these triumphal sacrificial scenes, in is not inconceivable to reason that the present Virtues are the beneficiaries of the offerings of the emperor’s sacrifice, just as Virtus and Felicitas were honored by Trajanic coinage. In any case, the appearance of Virtus outside of victory scenes but in victory-sacrifice compositions is justified.

Because these three Trajanic reliefs likely depict triumphal sacrifices conducted by the emperor in conjunction with his victory over the Dacians and attended by the personal Virtues of Trajan that defined his principate, namely Felicitas, Virtus, and Victoria, I would like to consider the identity of an

Amazon goddess depicted on the Domitianic Nollekens Relief, which illustrates a sacrificial libation (Fig. 159). Originally discovered in the vicinity of the Aula



Figure 159: Nollekens Relief: Domitian sacrificing at altar. Domitianic period. Gatchina Palace, Russia.

Regia in the Domus Flavia in 1722 and acquired by the British sculptor Joseph Nollekens, the eponymous relief eventually made its way to the Gatchina Palace outside of St. Petersburg, where it currently resides, albeit badly damaged from the bombing of the palace during World War II.⁴⁸ The relief depicts a togate Domitian, conducting a sacrificial libation in the presence of two lictors, a soldier, a *tibicen*, two *camilli*, two togati, the Genius Senatus, and an Amazon goddess, rendering the composition of the relief myth-historical.⁴⁹ All of the attendees, save the goddess, appear to be crowned with laurel; and the tips of the *fasces* carried by the lictors are adorned with sprouts of laurel – a similar motif depicted on the *fasces* carried by lictors on Cancelleria Frieze A – thereby indicating that this libation is no ordinary sacrifice, but, rather one of victory.⁵⁰ Domitian, heavily draped and *capite velato*, clutches a scroll in his left hand and, with his right, pours a libation from a *patera* onto a small altar. Pollini posits that his voluminous toga is likely the *toga picta*, embroidered with purple and worn by the *trumphator*.⁵¹ To the emperor's left stands and watches the Genius Senatus, identified by his aged and bearded visage. The Amazon goddess who frames the right-hand side of the scene is dressed in a double-belted Amazonian tunic that divests her right breast, a mantle that covers her left shoulder and cascades over her left arm, and pelt, open-toe shoes. Her head is not original; however, a typical crested helmet can be easily construed, as the restoration portrays. Positioned in a *Standmotiv*, she bears her weight on her right leg and partially relaxing the left leg at the knee. She grasps the hilt of her *parazonium* with her left hand. In her right hand, she wields a spear, originally with the spear tip pointing up, indicating that the goddess is actively participating rather than a mere representation of a statue.

⁴⁸ For a comprehensive analysis of the Nollekens Relief, its history, and its iconography, see Pollini 2017. Cf. also Ryberg 1955, 96, no. 48; Koeppel 1984, 12-3, 46-9; Kleiner 1992, 183, 185; Milhous 1992, 267-8; Hölscher 2009, 52-3.

⁴⁹ The emperor was originally identified by scholars as Titus, but Pollini (2017, 118-20) has carefully demonstrated that the portrait of the togate emperor is rather that of Domitian. Hölscher (2009, 52) initially identified the emperor as Domitian; however, without analysis.

⁵⁰ Pollini (2017, 120-1) proposes that the sacrifice takes place after Domitian's final double-triumph celebrated in 89 over the Chatti and the Dacians.

⁵¹ Pollini 2017, 113.

Pollini has interpreted the goddess as Roma, arguing that she is iconographically similar to the Amazon goddess on Frieze A of the Cancelleria Reliefs and that if it were Virtus, we would expect the presence of Honos.⁵² Pollini also cites the Aurelian Adventus and Profectio Panel Reliefs and Martial's epigram 8.65 in which Roma greets Domitian during his *adventus*. However, there are iconographical and contextual difficulties that preclude Roma as the correct identification of the Amazon goddess on the Nollekens Relief. The goddess should, rather, be identified as Virtus, as hypothesized by Milhous and Hölscher.⁵³ On Frieze A of the Cancelleria Reliefs, as I have demonstrated above, Virtus accompanies Domitian during his *ovatio*, celebrated after his *adventus/reditus* from Pannonia in 93 (not a *profectio*, as Pollini understands it); thus, the goddess is not Roma, who is, rather, relegated to her throne on Frieze B.⁵⁴ Therefore, the iconographical similarities which Pollini perceived between Virtus on the Nollekens Relief and Virtus on Cancelleria Frieze A are, indeed, rational. As for Honos, Milhous has established that the image of Honos does not necessarily have to be a semi-nude youth; he can be togate, attested by the Honos coinage of Antoninus Pius. Therefore, Milhous has proposed that the togate youth standing behind Virtus' right shoulder on the Nollekens Relief could be a representation of Honos.⁵⁵ Even if the togate youth is not Honos, the appearance of the god does not necessitate the appearance of Virtus and vice versa. From the time of the Claudian Medinaceli Reliefs onward, Virtus has been conceived as an independent goddess, as well as coupled with Honos, or with Victoria, Mars, Felicitas, etc; thus, that Virtus is not perceptibly paired with Honos does not preclude her identification as Virtus.

Furthermore, there are contextual difficulties with the identification of Roma. First, Pollini cites Martial, whose epigram (8.65) references Domitian's return from his Sarmatian campaign in 93 and states,

⁵² Pollini 2017, 117-8.

⁵³ Milhous 1992, 268; Hölscher 2009, 53. Koeppel (1984, 48) only suggests Roma or Virtus. This is not to say that Roma never appears in sacrificial scenes; for, on the Decennalia Base of the Five-Columns Monument erected in 303 by one of the Tetrarchs, a seated Roma, paired with Sol Invictus, appears during a sacrifice conducted by the emperor (Constantius I?).

⁵⁴ Pollini 2017, 116.

⁵⁵ Milhous 1992, 267-8.

“Here Roma, with her hair wreathed with laurel and dressed in white, greets her leader with her voice and hand.”⁵⁶ Pollini states that, “the presence of the goddess Roma in Martial’s *adventus* scene is mirrored in the Nollekens Relief,” implying that Martial’s Roma, in some way, characterizes the Amazon goddess in the Nollekens Relief; however, the Amazon goddess, whether Virtus or Roma, is never depicted with laurel around her head, nor does this goddess greet the emperor in any way. In connection with Martial’s epigram, Pollini introduces the Aurelian Adventus Panel Relief depicting the *adventus* of Marcus Aurelius, accompanied by Mars, Victoria, and an Amazon goddess who leads the emperor to the Porta Triumphalis.⁵⁷ Pollini identifies the Amazon goddess as Roma and interprets her image to represent *domi*, “home.”⁵⁸ However, the Aurelian relief does not depict the reception of the emperor by Roma as was a known motif in Hadrianic *adventus* scenes – a deviation of *adventus* scenes only because Hadrian had a special relationship with Roma as the founder of her first temple in Rome, giving her cult status. The Aurelian relief, rather, illustrates the guidance of the emperor to the Porta Triumphalis. Moreover, the triumphal and *adventus* iconography from the time of Augustus to the time of Trajan, especially during the principate of Domitian, establishes the fact that it is Virtus who guides the emperor after his victory, not Roma.

In order to historically contextualize the scene, it is necessary to examine the relationship which Domitian reserved for each Amazon goddess. The goddess Virtus represented the most important imperial virtue that Domitian claimed for himself, having struggled throughout his entire reign to obtain martial excellence that would reach parity with his father and brother. Beginning with Domitian’s victory and triumph over the Chatti in 83, the emperor initiated his Virtus coinage that was regularly produced throughout his principate, emblemized with his dedications to the goddess, whose gift he relentlessly strove to achieve. And, on another series, Domitian presented himself in the iconographic style of Virtus,

⁵⁶ Mart. 8.65.5-6: *hic lauru redimita comas et candida cultu Roma salutavit voce manuque ducem.*

⁵⁷ On the Aurelian Adventus Panel Relief, see discussion below in Chapter V.J.

⁵⁸ Pollini 2017, 124.

subordinating the personification of the Rhine under the weight of his foot. We also see the image of Virtus in the Triumphator Relief of the Arch of Titus, on the Domitianic Vatican Relief, and coupled with the emperor in the focus of Cancelleria Frieze A. As for Domitian's relationship with Roma, there does not appear to be one. He never minted a single coin of Roma, sitting or standing; and the only time we see her in a Domitianic setting is on Cancelleria Frieze B, isolated, and, likely, illustrated only as a location device, not partaking in any active role as Virtus does in Domitianic contexts. Therefore, if this relief were commissioned for Domitian to be erected in the Aula Regia of Domitian's palace, it would be a visual aberration to exclude Virtus, who was one of Domitian's cardinal Virtues, in a Domitianic victory scene and to include, instead, a participating Roma in a triumphal sacrifice, with whom Domitian had no established visual rapport.

Moreover, the three Trajanic reliefs depicting a triumphal sacrifice in the presence of Virtus lends credence to a Virtus identification on the Nollekens Relief. The image of Virtus was suitable not only for scenes of triumph and *ovatio*, but also for triumphal sacrifices, in which foreign victories were celebrated with a formulaic toast to the gods. Pollini postulates that the sacrifice taking place on the relief may allude to a sacrifice performed at the Porta Triumphalis, thereby recalling Domitian's triumph.⁵⁹ If this is the case, then the presence of Virtus would be most appropriate as the martial goddess who leads the emperor to triumph. Virtus appears one more time on a relief depicting a triumphal sacrifice from the Severan Quadrifrons in Lepcis Magna, lending credence to her subsidiary role as divine observer in sacrifices performed in the name of victory.⁶⁰

V.V: Hadrian and the Adaptation of the *Virtus Augusti*

Hadrian the emperor, unlike his adoptive father, was not a *vir militaris*, although he had attained a respectable military career before his principate. He had acquired some military experience when he

⁵⁹ Pollini 2017, 124.

⁶⁰ See discussion below: Chapter VI.B.

was younger, having begun his career as tribune in the *Legio II Adiutrix* in 95 in Lower Pannonia, but had transferred to the *Legio V Macedonica* in Upper Moesia and, again, to the *Legio XII Primigenia* in Upper Germany until 98/9, serving a tenure of not more than 54 months in the military under the principates of Domitian and Nerva.⁶¹ He had accompanied Trajan in the Dacian Wars of 101/2 as quaestor; and in the Second Dacian War in 105/6, Trajan had appointed Hadrian as commander of the *Legio I Minervia*. Sometime in 107, under the principate of Trajan, Hadrian returned to the Danube as praetorian legate of Pannonia Inferior in order to confine the Sarmatians.⁶² During this latter post, he learned of Trajan's intent to adopt him as his heir.⁶³ Hadrian's military career culminated in Syria, during Trajan's expedition against Parthia at the end of his reign, when he once again appointed Hadrian as commander of the expeditionary forces in Syria upon his departure from Rome in 117.⁶⁴ On August 11th, Trajan died; and Hadrian ascended the throne, forever retiring from military duty.

The stability of Rome's hegemony across the empire had reached equilibrium at the time of Hadrian's accession. However, the empire was stretched thin under Trajan's expansionist policies, especially toward the east and, in order to maintain cohesion, Hadrian withdrew Roman occupation from Mesopotamia, Assyria, Armenia, and parts of Dacia, which was no longer sustainable. Hadrian, rather, devoted his principate to the sustainability within the borders of the empire, preserving the *pax per orbem terrarum*.⁶⁵ And, in order to fulfill this vow, Hadrian, a Hellenophile, who preferred Greek cultural mores to Roman military customs, traveled throughout the provinces in an effort to extend a supporting hand to Rome's subjects, rather than follow traditionalist views on conquest and expansionism. However, his imperial policy on the avoidance of war left Hadrian deprived of the one imperial virtue the emperor of Rome needed to retain the authenticity of his reign through his guaranteed protection of Rome's welfare

⁶¹ *HA Hadr.* 2; Bennett 1997, 22, 45.

⁶² *HA Hadr.* 3; Bennett 1997, 101, 203.

⁶³ *HA Hadr.* 3. Bennett 1997, 203.

⁶⁴ Bennett 1997, 203.

⁶⁵ *HA Hadr.* 4.

under his sword and shield: *virtus Augusti*. Just like his predecessor, Hadrian recognized the fact that he needed to prove his worth as defender of the state, thereby qualifying his principate as worthy of the people's support and the only way to do this was to demonstrate his *virtus Augusti*. In doing so, not only would the safety and security of Rome be promised, but, in return, Hadrian would obtain honor, glory, and repute, leading to a successful principate just like that of his adoptive father Trajan.



Figure 160: Aureus of Hadrian featuring Virtus on the reverse. Ca. 119-122 CE.

However, since Hadrian was not a military emperor, although he may have considered himself one from his time in the military, he was tasked with inventing a new source of *virtus* – one that could be publicly recognized, since he was retired from campaigning in warfare.⁶⁶ Therefore, not unlike Cicero and the stoics, whose opportunities for earning *virtus* were limited since they did not possess military experience, Hadrian reformulated the imperialist *de facto* definition of

virtus as *virtus militaris* to include the hunt – a typical Greek recreation.⁶⁷ From the reign of Hadrian through the 3rd century, the hunt became a valid and accepted method of obtaining *virtus*, attested by Hadrian's Virtus coin-types that endorse the opportunity to demonstrate martial *virtus* from a victory in a chase rather than from a victory on the battlefield. Hadrian did, however, mint several issues of standard

⁶⁶ According to the author of the *Historia Augusta* (*Hadr.* 10.4), Hadrian encouraged soldiers *exemplo virtutis*, “by his own example of *virtus*.”

⁶⁷ For Cicero's reappropriation of *virtus* as a quality of moral excellence akin to *aretē*, see chapter 2. For the limited opportunities for men outside of the imperial family to earn martial *virtus*, cf. Roller 2001, 97-108. Tuck (2005) attempted to push the redefinition of *virtus* to include the hunt back to Domitian, however, unsuccessfully. He founds his hypothesis on the famous equestrian bronze statue of Domitian (replaced with the portrait of Nerva) from Misenum, arguing that the statue once portrayed a hunting scene. However, there is no evidence for the hunt and an overwhelming body of evidence in support for a traditional military equestrian statue. First, a reputation in military glory was the one of the only virtues Domitian ever truly desired and he desired it from waging numerous wars against Rome's enemies. There is no evidence that Domitian tried to redefine *virtus* with non-military activities, i.e. hunting (pg. 242). Second, the senate honored Domitian with an equestrian statue for his victory over the Dacians (*Stat. Silv.* 1.1.1); and this statue from Misenum is likely to have been a copy of his official equestrian statue in Rome. Third, Domitian minted coins depicting himself on horseback with spear, trampling an enemy below, in a way analogous to the equestrian statue. Fourth, if displaying his *virtus* in the hunt was so important to Domitian, then why do visual comparanda for Domitian in a hunt cease to exist, and why only display his hunting virtue in the Sacellum of the Augustales in Misenum of all places when Domitian's villa in the Alban Hills near Castel Gandolfo (*Suet. Dom.* 19)? Therefore, I maintain, along with the vast majority of scholars, that the visual evidence for imperial hunting scenes and their implications of imperial prowess begins with Hadrian.

Virtus coins sporadically during his reign, likely in conjunction with the emperor's *virtus* earned in his previous military endeavors as one of Trajan's most trusted military commanders. A new die had been created for a short-lived Virtus series, likely dated to between 119 and 122. On the reverse of an aureus, Virtus stands frontally, for the first time (**Fig. 160**).⁶⁸ She dons a crested helmet with draping plume in the back. She wears a double-belted Amazonian tunic with a possibly unveiled right breast, a mantle that rests on her left shoulder and left arm, as well as pelt boots, one of which rests on an unidentifiable object,



Figure 161: Aureus of Hadrian featuring Virtus on the reverse. Ca. 121-122 CE.

likely a helmet. She carries a *parazonium* in the crook of her left hand and grasps a dual-tipped spear – a new attribute of Virtus. Although there is no identifying legend, the iconography of Virtus is clear. The reverse of another aureus depicts a Virtus consistent with her visual canon, adopted from dies created by the Flavians and Trajan (**Fig. 161**).⁶⁹



Figure 162: Denarius of Hadrian featuring Virtus on the reverse. Ca. 118-122 CE.

The goddess is labeled *VIRTVTI AVG*, written in the dative, which is indicative of a formal dedication to the goddess, rather than just depicting the personification of one of the emperor's qualities. And a variant sesterius illustrates the goddess, labeled *VIRT AVG*, standing left, with her right foot firmly planted on a helmet (**Fig. 162**).⁷⁰ The helmet suggests a reminiscence of Hadrian's military command under the auspices of Trajan.

Having never waged a war during his reign, however, Hadrian struck a series of bronze medallions that attest to the emperor's ideological addendum to the definition of *virtus*, which now includes martial valor displayed in the hunt. On the reverse of one of two different

⁶⁸ *BMCRE Hadr.* 110; *RIC 2² Hadr.* 66. Mattingly (1936, 255) mistakenly labels the Amazon goddess "Mars," most likely because similar dies depicting Mars were created; however, he wears a muscular cuirass and carries a shield.

⁶⁹ *BMCRE Hadr.* 774a-b; 1050, and Mattingly 1936, 380, no. 25, 1239-41 (*VIRTVTI AVGVSTI* variant); *RIC 2² Hadr.* 287, 605.

⁷⁰ *BMCRE Hadr.* 1263-4, 1307-8; *RIC 2² Hadr.* 614a-d, 638, 696.



Figure 163: Bronze Medallion of Hadrian. Hadrianic period.

lion-hunt medallions is the emperor on a galloping horse attacking a bolting lion (**Fig. 163**).⁷¹ The emperor wears a *paludamentum* and intends to thrust his spear at the fleeing lion. The hunting scene is framed by the legend *VIRTVTI AVGVSTI* above. This is the first time in Roman coinage that the legend identifying *virtus* does not correspond with either an image of the goddess *Virtus* or an image of the emperor with the attributes of *Virtus*. Hadrian's medallion demonstrates the inclusion of the hunt by the Roman emperor not only into the visual repertoire of *Virtus* coinage, but also as new entry for the definition of the *virtus Augusti*.

Having retired from his military career under the principate of Trajan, Hadrian no longer possessed the opportunity to exercise his *virtus* on the battlefield. However, since the people of Rome rely on the emperor's ability to defend the realm from a foreign threat and maintain peace, Hadrian was obligated to discover another source of his *virtus* with a new visual antecedent that could publicly demonstrate his martial valor, since battle was no longer an option. And it is likely that a visual representation of the goddess *Virtus* would not suffice, at least not on its own, since her image had been historically associated with victory earned on a foreign battlefield. Therefore, because Hadrian had neither military victories nor triumphs of his own during his reign, he turned to his love of hunting to demonstrate his *virtus Augusti*, illustrated by his medallions.⁷² And because the legend is written in the dative, it is permissible to presume that the legend is not a dedicatory statement to the goddess *Virtus*, as on previous coins, but, rather, suggests that the victory gained from slaying a wild beast is an act accomplished for the benefit of the *virtus Augusti*, i.e. "for the emperor's [reputation in] *virtus*."

⁷¹ Grueber 1874, 6, no. 18; see also 4, no. 10 for a boar hunt (no legend). This medallion is in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (acc. no. 1984.581).

⁷² *HA Hadr.* 2. Although, the senate granted Hadrian a triumph on behalf of Trajan's military accomplishments in Parthia, but Hadrian declined (*ibid.* 6).

Hadrian was also cognizant of the fact that the *virtus Augusti* needed to be publicly displayed in Rome for the sake of an emperor's credibility as the defender of Rome. Therefore, just as his predecessors visualized their *virtus Augusti* through celebrating an *ovatio* or a triumph, or it was manifested in physical emblems such as *tropaea*, a triumphal arch, or victory scenes representing the goddess Virtus in relief sculpture, Hadrian, too, monumentalized his *virtus Augusti* for the general public to view and used the hunt as a visual analogue to affirm that he was an emperor with credible *virtus Augusti*. Three Hadrianic tondi, sculpted in relief and preserved on the Arch of Constantine, illustrate Hadrian engaged in the hunt of a bear, a boar, and a lion, and another demonstrating the preparation for the hunt. The bear hunting tondo is visually analogous to the medallion above, thereby asserting his *virtus Augusti* in full public view, once ornamenting one of Hadrian's many public works in Rome (**Fig. 164**). Moreover, Hadrian's decision to include the hunt as a satisfactory way to obtain *virtus*, coupled with his visual proclamations of his acquisitions of *virtus* in the hunt, rendered the image of Virtus "open-source" in hunting scenes, indicated by mid-2nd and 3rd-century sarcophagi displaying the hunt in conjunction with the participation of the goddess Virtus. From the mid-2nd century on, Virtus was no longer the sole province of the emperor. However, even though the image of Virtus was used on mid-2nd century sarcophagi, the *Virtus Augusti*



Figure 164: Hadrianic Tondo depicting Hadrian in a hunt. Hadrianic period. Arch of Constantine.

and her visual role as the goddess symbolizing the emperor's martial excellence still remained the sole province of the emperor.⁷³

⁷³ See Milhous (1992, 170-225), who has compiled a list of known Roman sarcophagi featuring Virtus. Cf. also Hansen 2008, 280-2.



Figure 165: Denarius of Hadrian featuring Hadrian with spear and parazonium on the reverse. Hadrianic period.



Figure 166: Denarius of Hadrian featuring an Amazonian Roma. Hadrianic period.



Figure 167: Denarius of Hadrian featuring the seated Roma type. Hadrianic period.

Hadrian's hunting-*virtus* is also likely the reason why images of Virtus are not prevalent during his principate, only used for the few coin issues described above, since her image was synonymous with military virtue. Although, a denarius does depict Hadrian with the same attributes and pose as Virtus, carrying a *parazonium* in the crook of his left arm and wielding a spear in his right hand (**Fig. 165**).⁷⁴ He wears a cuirass, *paludamentum*, and boots; however, his left boot does not rest on a helmet, but rather on a crocodile, which suggests that his victory was not won on the Egyptian battlefield but rather in the hunt. Therefore, Hadrian's decision on founding his *virtus Augusti* on the trophies he obtained through the hunt rather than on a false reputation of military *virtus* through victories on the battlefield likely precluded Hadrian from cultivating a sacred bond with the goddess Virtus, unlike the way in which his predecessors established their accord with Virtus from their victories in war.

Hadrian, instead, developed a venerable bond with another Amazon goddess, Roma, whose earliest sanctuary in Rome he founded – the Temple of Venus and Roma – granting Roma cult status for the first time in Rome.⁷⁵ There are two typologies of Roma under Hadrian: the seated matron and the standing Amazon goddess. The Amazonian Roma type is comparable to Hadrian's Virtus type of the short Amazonian tunic

⁷⁴ *BMCRE Hadr.* 1617; *RIC 2^d Hadr.* 782a, d; Mattingly (1936, clxxxii) states that Hadrian as Virtus with foot on crocodile is an unexplained motif. However, Hadrian's *VIRTVS AVGVSTI* coinage of beast hunts makes it permissible to apply the same message here.

⁷⁵ Dio 69.3-4; Cassiod. *Chron.* AD 135. The writer of the *Historia Augusta* (*Hadr.* 19) refers to it as the "*Templum Urbis*."



Figure 168: Denarius of Hadrian featuring an Adventus scene with a seated Roma and Hadrian on the reverse. Ca. 118 CE.



Figure 169: Aureus of Hadrian featuring an Adventus scene with a standing Roma and Hadrian. Ca. 118 CE.

variation (**Fig. 166**).⁷⁶ The only difference is that Roma holds a victoriola in the palm of her right hand, which extends a laurel wreath toward Roma. However, when Roma is seated on a pile of arms, her image is transformed into a matron type, which depicts Roma in a long and voluminous chiton (**Fig. 167**).⁷⁷ Both Roma types were used for Hadrian's *Adventus* series.

Hadrian minted an innumerable quantity of *adventus*-themed coins for all of the provinces he visited, representing all of his arrivals to new places. The iconography is largely formulaic: Hadrian stands right, faces a personification of one of the provinces, whose iconography reflects the attributes of the province (e.g. Africa wears an elephant headdress), and who pours a libation onto an altar. The emperor is togate rather than in armor, signifying that he arrives as *princeps*, not as *imperator* – a hallmark

of the way in which Hadrian desired to be portrayed.⁷⁸ When Hadrian returned to Rome in 118, he celebrated an *adventus* unlike any other and struck a series of *adventus* coins commemorating his safe return to Rome.⁷⁹ The issues of *adventus* coins, which began in 118, feature Roma, seated as a matron or standing as an Amazon, greeting the arriving togate emperor in a *dextrarum iunctio* in a scene of reception rather than procession (**Figs. 168, 169**).⁸⁰ The iconography is devoid of any military motive, antithetical to

⁷⁶ *BMCRE Hadr.* 147-50, 361-6; *RIC 2² Hadr.* 76, 161c-d.

⁷⁷ *BMCRE Hadr.* 132b, 133-46, 367-75, 700-8, 1147-51, 1349b, 1356-7, 1364; *RIC 2² Hadr.* 77a-d, 78a, c, 162c, d, 163c-d, 164c-d, 165c-d, 220a-f. *Nota bene* Roma carries a variety of attributes: victoriola, laurel branch, *parazonium*, cornucopia.

⁷⁸ Mattingly 1936, clxxi-clxxii. The *adventus* is celebrated in Africa, Alexandria, Arabia, Asia, Bithynia, Britannia, Cilicia, Gallia, Hispania, Italia, Iudaea, Macedonia, Mauretania, Moesia, Noricum, Phrygia, Sicilia, and Thracia. Cf. also Toynbee 1967, 24-130. Seated Roma: *BMCRE Hadr.* 580; *RIC 2² Hadr.* 224c, 547, 554. Standing Roma: *BMCRE Hadr.* 581-8, 1476-80; 225a-f, 226a, c, 227a, c, 740c-f, 741c, f, h, 742. Cf. also Brilliant, 1963, 135-6.

⁷⁹ Hadrian's *adventus* in 118 was recorded by the Arval Brethren, which celebrated the emperor's *adventus* with sacrifices on the Capitoline in thanks for his safe return (*CIL* 6.2078, 2079, 32374). Cf. also Brilliant 1963, 135.

⁸⁰ Mattingly (1936, 401-2) dates the first series to 118; however, the series were minted throughout his reign and even as late as 134-138 (*ibid.* 315). The later series suggest that Hadrian celebrated multiple *adventus* occasions as he was traveling from province to province.

the military *adventus* compositions of Trajan and many of Hadrian's imperial successors. Just as Hadrian redefined the *virtus Augusti*, so too, did he redefine the *adventus Augusti*. Because Hadrian was not a military emperor, he removed the martial characteristics of a traditional *adventus* that historically signaled the return to Rome from war, e.g. arms, armor, a horse, soldiers, Virtus, Mars and/or Victoria. And where we would normally find Virtus leading the emperor towards the Porta Triumphalis, we now find Roma as her replacement in Hadrianic *adventus* compositions. The substitution of Roma for Virtus indicates that an image of Virtus was inappropriate for Hadrianic *adventus* scenes since the *adventus* for Hadrian was not military in intent.⁸¹ However, the military formula for *adventus* scenes comprising a



Figure 170: Adventus of Hadrian Relief. Hadrianic period. Capitoline Museums.

combination of martial and/or triumphal characteristics and a journey into Rome, was adopted by Hadrian for his personal *adventus* scenes, which preserved the journey into Rome, but substituted the martial qualities of an *adventus* for a more civic expression of perpetual peace.⁸² Hadrian's adoption of military *adventus* iconography is best demonstrated by the so-called Adventus of Hadrian Relief in the Palazzo dei Conservatori (**Fig. 170**). Hadrian approaches the city gate from the right, accompanied

⁸¹ It can be argued that the image of Roma as an Amazon warrior alludes to some sort of military qualities of Hadrian's *adventus*; however, the martial image of Roma is already canonical and does not portend a new military victory won by the emperor upon his return to Rome, but, rather, the perpetuity of Rome's hegemony.

⁸² Cf. Klose (2015), who argues that there is no *adventus* formula. He sees each individual scene as idiosyncratic rather than formulaic and urges scholars to surrender traditional methods in studying arrival and departure iconography, such as comparative analysis. I agree, in part, namely apropos of the fact that more contextual analyses need to be done in order to better understand the historical significance and the consequences of every independent arrival and departure scene. However, I disagree in that there do exist iconographical formulae embedded within these so-called *adventus* and *profectio* compositions even if the exact details do not align for him to the naked eye. Each *adventus/profectio* scene still elicits certain iconographical characteristics from a larger pool of arrival/departure iconography, thereby, creating a combination of details to formulate a visual message of an *adventus* or *profectio* that could still be understood by the viewer. Or else we run the risk of claiming that details and combinations of elements are arbitrary and, therefore, every scene needed a label to be correctly identified and understood. This is why comparative analyses are still imperative in determining these formulae.

by an entourage of unarmed *signiferi* and a *fascēs*-bearing lictor.⁸³ The gate is simple, undecorated, and devoid of any victory elements which one might expect if the emperor of Rome were returning from war. We may presume that this non-victory gate has supplanted the Porta Triumphalis to disambiguate a civil *adventus* from a martial one. Moreover, Hadrian is fully togate where we would otherwise expect an emperor in military uniform or travel attire, i.e. tunic with *paludamentum*. Witnessed by the Genius Senatus and the Genius Populi Romani, Hadrian, with a clasp of hands, greets Roma, who has adopted the full iconography of Virtus.⁸⁴ Roma dons a crested helmet and carries a spear in her left hand. She is dressed in a double-belted tunic, a heavily draped mantle, balteus, and pelt boots. The only iconographical feature that helps the viewer distinguish between Roma and Virtus is the *dextrarum iunctio* with the emperor, otherwise attested on Hadrian's *Adventus* coinage. If not for this significant detail, she would have been easily mistaken for Virtus, whose image is already established in the visual language of triumph and *adventus* scenes. Roma is given the task of greeting the emperor inside or outside the city's gate in a scene of reception rather than a scene of procession in which Virtus guides the emperor into Rome. And although Hadrian's *adventus* program lacks a victory or military objective, he has still appropriated the visual formulae of a martial-themed *adventus*, especially with the inclusion of the iconography of Virtus, which Roma assumes. Thus, the *virtus Augusti* is produced from the victory in the hunt for Hadrian, rather than from victory on the battlefield. Virtus does not guide Hadrian to Rome from war during his *adventus*, contrary to *adventus* scenes from emperors arriving to Rome in victory and in *virtus*.

V.VI: The Arcus Novus Relief

Fragments of a relief depicting Virtus and the emperor were discovered along the Via Lata in 1523 at the location of the Arcus Novus – erected in 303/4 by Diocletian on the occasion of the 20th anniversary

⁸³ Cafiero and Martellotti 1986, 13.

⁸⁴ Roma's right arm and the orb she holds are original. The orb was added as an error in restoration in 1595 by Ruggero Bescapé, cf. Cafiero and Martellotti 1986, 13, 17-8. Cf. also Koeppl 1969, 156-8.

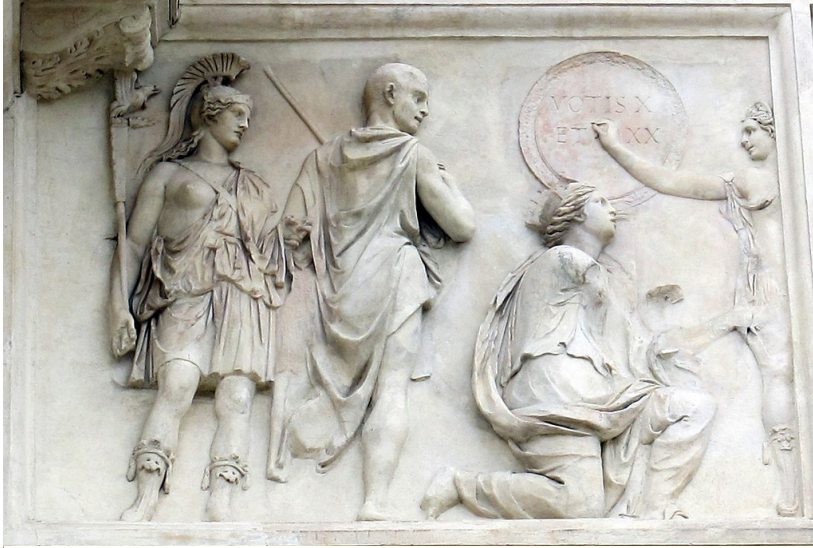


Figure 171: The Arcus Novus Relief depicting Virtus, the emperor, a subjugated personification, and Venus. Antonine period.

of his sovereignty in Rome (vicennalia), and demolished by Pope Innocent VIII in 1491.⁸⁵ However, the relief was appropriated from another visual program of victory in Rome and revised to decorate Diocletian's new arch.⁸⁶ The relief has been restored,

unfortunately incorrectly in two *pasticci*, and currently decorates the exterior wall of the courtyard of the Villa Medici (**Fig. 171**). The original monument of the reliefs is unknown. Laubscher, in his 1976 monograph on the Arcus Novus (followed by Koeppel), dates the reliefs to the Claudian period on stylistic and historical criteria, as well as on account of its proximity to the Arch of Claudius (150m north), the location of which has yielded its own set of reliefs.⁸⁷ However, Veyne concluded that the reliefs cannot date before the principate of Antoninus Pius on iconographical grounds.⁸⁸ Moreover, even though on stylistic grounds a Julio-Claudian date is warranted, the image of Virtus is so similar to the image of Roma on the Adventus of Hadrian Relief that an Antonine date is also warranted; however, the relief's characteristics of victory and conquest obviate a Hadrianic date.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ De Maria 1988, 312. See also *ibid.* 314 for an exhaustive bibliography on the Arcus Novus. See also Koeppel 1983, 72. Only the chronicler of 354 mentions the Arcus Novus: *Chronica Minora* 1.148.22.

⁸⁶ Besides the martial image of Virtus, two column bases carved in relief and depicting Victoriae and barbarian trophies were discovered with the Arcus Novus Relief, which are now in the Florentine Boboli Gardens. For their discovery together, cf. Marliani B. 1534. *Urbis Romae Topographia*, pg. 136 and 1944. *Urbis Romae Topographia*, pg. 93. Kleiner (1992 412) demonstrates that the designer of the arch had a particular program in mind in deciding which Roman monuments to spoliates. Since the column bases are thematically martial, the Arcus Novus Relief must have complemented this martial program.

⁸⁷ Laubscher 1976, 81-6, 88-9; Koeppel 1983, 73, 79, 121; Kuttner 1992, 226, no. 69. Kleiner (1992, 413) also leans toward a Claudian date.

⁸⁸ Cozza 1958; Veyne 1959, 54-5; 1960, 313; Kleiner 1985, 60-1; De Maria 1988, 312-3; Richardson 1992, 27.

⁸⁹ Cagianò (Cagianò, M. 1951. *Le Antichità di Villa Medici*. Rome, pp. 48-50) argues that the relief derives from an arch erected between 140-160 and depict a scene pertaining to Hadrian. Although the dating is sound, the martial characteristics, i.e. Virtus, on the relief preclude an event of Hadrian, who was not a military emperor and celebrated no military victories of his own.



Figure 172: Arcus Novus Relief fragments before restoration.

Four extant marble slabs comprise a partial reconstruction of the much larger Arcus Novus Relief, which can be seen displayed together as plaster casts in the Museo della Civiltà Romana (**Fig. 172**).⁹⁰ The focus of the composition is the wreathed shield, mounted on a tall pillar, on which Venus (identified by her flying companion Cupid above her left shoulder) writes.⁹¹ The inscription currently reads *VOTIS X ET XX*; and, it has been argued that the inscription was a secondary addition to the relief exhibited for Diocletian's Arcus Novus, likely after the original inscription was erased.⁹² This relief of an earlier date was appropriated for the Arcus Novus erected in 293/4 to celebrate the *decennalia* of the tetrarchy, the forthcoming *vicennalia* as emperor in 303, as well as the celebration of his triumph over the Persians.⁹³

⁹⁰ Cozza (1958, 109-11) later determined the correct order of the reliefs. Kuttner (1995, 225-6, no. 68) writes that she is not convinced that these slabs all belong together to form a single relief. I add that the setting is unusual for Virtus and agree that it is possible that these slabs do not, necessarily, all belong together. They could be only from the same series, but the individual slabs do not necessitate a singular relief, with the exception of slabs three and four. There was clearly an adjoining slab between slabs two and three, which would have further removed Virtus and the emperor from the shield, rendering it less likely that the shield was the focus of the emperor's gaze. The number of slabs missing from this group is not certain. However, I will still investigate the slabs together as one unified composition, since this is the way in which they have been historically presented.

⁹¹ Veyne (1959, 54) identifies her as Venus *Felix*, goddess of the Temple of Venus and Roma, partially constructed by Hadrian but finished by Antoninus Pius. Venus *Felix* was also a coin type during the age of Hadrian. Venus *Genetrix*, *Felix*, and *Victrix* were also closely associated with Faustina, attested by her issues of coins. Cf. also Laubscher 1976, 80; De Maria 1988, 313.

⁹² Buttrey (1983, 379) points out that it is not possible that the shield was originally left blank; for, the *clipeus* placed on a column motif was traditionally intended for inscription. Therefore, it is most probable that the original inscription was removed for the new inscription *VOTIS X ET XX*.

⁹³ Inscription: *CIL* 6.31383. For a dating of 293/4, cf. Buttrey 1983, 378-83 (followed by Kleiner 1992, 409). De Maria (1988, 314) also leans toward a 293/4 date.

Kneeling below Venus are two mural-crowned personifications of provinces, who extend their arms toward the goddess.⁹⁴ One other female personification stands to the left, who does not wear a mural crown, but wears a band around her forehead and holds a bow in her right hand. Her appearance resembles the personified provinces from the column bases of the Temple of Hadrian in Rome, again offering credence to a post-Hadrianic, Antonine date.⁹⁵ Upon her shoulder is the hand and arm of another figure, conjectured to be another female personification of a province. To her left stands a male figure in three-quarter view with his back turned away from the viewer. The only surviving elements of his image are his partial *paludamentum* draped over his back, the top of his head, and a spear carried in his left hand. He is considered either to be the emperor or a soldier. His forehead is furrowed and his hair, articulated by a drill, is kept short, comparable to the hairstyles of men and emperors in the late-3rd and early-4th centuries.⁹⁶ The late-Roman coiffure indicates a reworking of the face and suggests that the cloaked male was significant enough to recut.⁹⁷ Therefore, he was likely the emperor.⁹⁸

At the far left is Virtus, lending credence to the identity of the cloaked male as the emperor (**Fig. 173**).⁹⁹ She stands in three-quarter view, but her visage is in profile. She dons an Attic helmet, the body of which is decorated with a *cupido* riding a sea monster and the central crest is supported by a reclining sphinx.¹⁰⁰ She wears her canonical short Amazonian tunic, double-belted, that divests her right breast and pelt boots. She also wears a mantle that is fastened with a *fibula* on her left shoulder and drapes over her left arm. The balteus slung across her chest is decorated with zodiac signs.

⁹⁴ Two personifications on their knees and at least four altogether makes it contextually difficult to date this to the reign of Claudius, who only conquered Britain; however, the reliefs could be a Claudian celebration of Augustus just like the Medinaceli Reliefs. Veyne (1959, 53-4) posits that the two kneeling personifications represent Europa and Asia and the two standing personifications represent Armenia and Parthia and the hand on shoulder motif represents their reconciliation. However, Laubscher (1976, 91) believes that the personifications allude Claudius' conquest of Britain and celebrated triumph in 44.

⁹⁵ For the provinces from the Hadrianeum, cf. Toynbee 1967, 152-9 and pls. 34-5.

⁹⁶ Kleiner 1992, 412.

⁹⁷ Laubscher 1976, 79, 86; Koeppel 1983, 120-1; De Maria 1988, 313.

⁹⁸ Laubscher 1976, 86-7; Koeppel 1983, 121; De Maria 1988, 313.

⁹⁹ There is a unanimous consensus that the Amazon goddess represents Virtus *par excellence militaire*.

¹⁰⁰ Laubscher 1976, 87.



Figure 173: Plaster cast of the Arcus Novus Relief: detail of Virtus. Museo della Civiltà Romana.

Milhous suggests that such cosmic symbols worn by Virtus could refer to Virtus' celestial abode and her function of placing worthy souls in the sky as stars.¹⁰¹ With her left hand, she grasps the hilt of her *parazonium* and clutches a military standard crowned with an eagle perched on a bundle of lightning bolts.¹⁰² The Roman standard which Virtus carries is the main attribute that distinguishes her from Roma, as Roma never carries a military standard, just as the *dextrarum iunctio* distinguishes Roma from Virtus on the Adventus of Hadrian Relief. Even though the iconography of Virtus and of Roma are almost the same during the Hadrianic period, their actions are not. Virtus accompanies the emperor during some sort of victory celebration, just as she does on Cancelleria

Frieze A. A victory celebration is corroborated by the presence of Virtus, who only appears after a victory is obtained, as well as by the wreathed shield mounted on a pillar, which is iconographically comparable to the *clipeus virtutis*.¹⁰³ Moreover, two of the female personifications appear as subjugated provinces, who both beseech Venus with their hands, suggesting that they have been recently conquered by the *virtus* of the emperor, represented by the goddess Virtus, who oversees the emperor's subordinated provinces to the left. Virtus does not touch the emperor, as she does on Cancelleria Frieze A. However, her left arm and *parazonium* overlap the emperor's body in such a vacuous field that the viewer is signaled to understand that this Virtus belongs with the emperor and that she is the Virtus Augusti. Whether the

¹⁰¹ Milhous 1992, 309.

¹⁰² Milhous (1992, 309) states that the eagle-tipped standard Virtus carries is similar to the one carried by Roma on coins of Galba (e.g. *RIC 1² Galb.* 203); however, Roma holds an eagle-tipped scepter, which is often carried at a diagonal angle. The Roman standards were never so haphazardly carried; they were always carried (and shown) upright.

¹⁰³

reliefs are truly Antonine or [less-likely] Julio-Claudian, one ideological precept of *virtus* remains the same: the goddess Virtus [Augusti] always resides with the victorious emperor, as she maintains the safety, security, and the *pax Romana* across all Roman provinces.

V.VII: The *Virtus Augusti* of the Antonines

If the Arcus Novus Relief belonged to the Antonine period, then it would be only one of three surviving state reliefs to express the Antonine emperors' relationship with the goddess Virtus, the other two being the Aurelian Adventus Panel Relief and the Apotheosis of Lucius Verus Relief from the Great Antonine Altar at Ephesus. However, the Antonine coinage attests to a secure relationship between Virtus and Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Lucius Verus, and Commodus, although in different ways.

The Virtus coinage of Antoninus Pius is predictable with some slight variations and one completely new Virtus-formula. The reverse of a denarius features Virtus, with or without legend, who is positioned in an archetypal *Standmotiv* (Fig. 174).¹⁰⁴ She wears a crested helmet, double-belted Amazonian tunic that bares her breast, and pelt boots.

She carries a reverse spear in her right hand and cradles her *parazonium*. On a series of aurei, Virtus adds a mantle to her wardrobe and exchanges her spear for a victoriola, which faces away from the goddess, indicating that a victory through the emperor's *virtus* has been obtained (Fig. 175)¹⁰⁵ Another variation depicts Virtus, facing right or left, labeled or unlabeled, who



Figure 174: Denarius of Antoninus Pius featuring Virtus on the reverse. Antonine period.



Figure 175: Aureus of Antoninus Pius featuring Virtus on the reverse. Antonine period.



Figure 176: Denarius of Antoninus Pius featuring Virtus on the reverse. Antonine period.

¹⁰⁴ BMCRE Ant. Piu. 203b, 236b, 255-9, 505-6, 563-4, 777c, 874-5, 893-7, 1790-2, 1800d; RIC 3 Ant. Piu. 89, 102a-d, 118-9, 122, 153d, 154, 454, 462, 468, 473, 1258, 1268, 1299, 1300, 1304,

¹⁰⁵ BMCRE Ant. Piu. 773-4, 824, 840, RIC 3 Ant. Piu. 452a-e; cf. also Milhous 1992, 150.



Figure 177: Sestertius of Antoninus Pius featuring a seated Virtus. Antonine period.



Figure 178: Aureus of Antoninus Pius featuring the emperor on the reverse. Antonine period.

wears a heavily draped mantle over her left shoulder and rests her foot on a helmet, symbolizing that the adversary had been dispatched (**Fig. 176**).¹⁰⁶ Moreover, for the first time in Roman coinage under Antoninus Pius, Virtus is depicted as a seated goddess, much like her Amazonian counterpart Roma. On the reverse of a sestertius, Virtus, with or without identifying legend (*VIRTVS AVG*), is seated on a chair (**Fig. 177**).¹⁰⁷ She wears a helmet and a long chiton that exposes her right breast. She leans on a spear in her left hand and wields a *parazonium* in her right hand. That Virtus is now depicted as a seated goddess following the iconography of Roma establishes an unambiguous ideological connection between the *virtus Romae* and the *virtus Augusti*, through which the *virtus* of the state manifests itself. This seated Virtus type makes it transparent that the *virtus Augusti* was a visual analogue to the *virtus* of the Roman state. This

is best exemplified by an aureus depicting Antoninus Pius in the same manner as Virtus (**Fig. 178**).¹⁰⁸ Antoninus Pius is positioned in a *Standmotiv* and stands on the globe of the world. He wears a cuirass, military tunic, pelt boots, and a *paludamentum* and holds a reverse spear and *parazonium*. His left foot is fixed on the *orbis terrarum*, expressing that the world has been conquered by the *virtus Augusti*.

That the *virtus Augusti* of Antoninus Pius reached the farthest corners of the empire is attested by a provincial panel relief discovered along the Antonine Wall in Britannia. The relief not only declares the emperor's *virtus Augusti* by inscription, but the inscription is presented by the goddess Virtus herself

¹⁰⁶ *BMCRE Ant. Piu.* 610, 962-6, 1783-5, 1916-7, 1918c, 2084-6, 2087b, 2107, 2120b; *RIC 3 Ant. Piu.* 60, 104, 433, 480a-e, 1252, 1282, 1297, 1304a-b, 1307, 1323, 1349a.

¹⁰⁷ Dated to 148/9: Mattingly 1940, 304; *BMCRE Ant. Piu.* 1854c; *RIC 3 Ant. Piu.* 1283, 1295.

¹⁰⁸ *BMCRE Ant. Piu.* 260-2; *RIC 3 Ant. Piu.* 105ad, 105ba-bd, 105ca, 105cc, 106.



Figure 179: Sandstone inscription and relief from the Antonine Wall. Antonine period.

(Fig. 179). The sandstone relief was produced by the vexillation of the *Legio VI Victrix* that marked their completed distance of the Antonine Wall. The inscription reads: "To the *imperator* Caesar Titus Aelius Hadrianus Antoninus Augustus, *pater patriae*, the *vexillatio* of the *Legio VI Victrix Pia*



Figure 180: Sandstone inscription and relief from the Antonine Wall: detail of Virtus. Antonine period.

Fidelis, built the work of the wall over a distance of 3240 feet."¹⁰⁹ The panel is supported by the emperor's martial triad of Mars, Victoria, and Virtus. Two *Victoriae* who hold up the panel are flanked by Mars with helmet, cuirass, spears and shield on the left and, on the right, by Virtus (Fig. 180). Virtus is positioned in her typical *Standmotiv*. She dons a helmet, open-toe boots, and wears her canonical Amazonian tunic, double-belted, that reveals her right breast. In her left hand, she carries a *parazonium*, and, in her right, she proudly displays a *vexillum* that bears the inscription *VIRT AVG*. This image of Virtus is comparable to the 3rd-century Budapest Virtus, who also carries a *vexillum*, albeit

unlabeled (Fig. 2); however, we can now imagine that the *vexillum* proclaimed the *virtus Augusti*. Nevertheless, this Antonine relief is significant. Not only has the image of Virtus [Augusti] reached the ends of the empire by the mid-2nd century, but her image was still understood as a visual reference to the

¹⁰⁹ Now in the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow. *CIL* 7.1135 = *RIB* 2200: *IMP C T AELIO HADRIANO ANTONINO AVG P P VEX LEG VI VICTRICES P F OPVS VALLI P MMM CCXL F*. Cf. also Keppie, LJF and B.J. Arnold. 1984. *Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani. Great Britain*. Vol. 1, Fasc. 4, Scotland. Oxford: British Academy, pp. 54-55, Nr. 150 and Pl. 37, 150.



Figure 181: Aureus of Marcus Aurelius featuring Virtus on the reverse. 158-60 CE.

emperor's *virtus*. The inscription neither lauds the *virtus* of the vexillation nor the *virtus* of the legion, but rather the *virtus* of the current emperor, Antoninus Pius, whose *virtus Augusti* protects Roman Britain from the marauding barbarians north of the wall.



Figure 182: Denarius of Marcus Aurelius featuring the seated Virtus type on the reverse.

Toward the end of Antoninus Pius' reign, coins featuring Marcus Aurelius on the obverse and a standing Virtus on the reverse were initially minted in 158-160, indicative of the transfer of the *virtus Augusti* from Antoninus Pius to Marcus Aurelius.¹¹⁰ And during his own reign, Marcus Aurelius continued to mint the standing Virtus with spear and outward facing victoriola, whereas Lucius Verus invented a new type in which Virtus replaces both her spear and *parazonium* with a reverse victoriola and a trophy – a physical testament to the emperor's *virtus* acquired on the



Figure 183: Sestertius of Marcus Aurelius featuring a profectio scene without the goddess Virtus on the reverse. Antonine period.

battlefield (**Fig. 181**).¹¹¹ Marcus Aurelius also continued to mint the seated Virtus type coins, with identifying legend *VIRTVS AVG* (**Fig. 182**).¹¹² However, it is his invention of a *VIRTVS AVG* type that is remarkable, in which he displays his *virtus Augusti* in a military setting. On the reverse of a sestertius, Marcus Aurelius guides his army, comprised of *signiferi*, soldiers, and a horse, over a bridge, below which roars a river with three ships or pontoons (**Fig. 183**).¹¹³ The legend in the exergue reads *VIRTVS AVG S C*. This episode is also

¹¹⁰ *BMCRE Ant. Piu.* 2084-6, 2087b, 2107, 2120b; *RIC 3 Ant. Piu.* 433, 452a-e, 454-5, 462, 468, 473, 480a-e, 1258, 1268, 1282, 1283, 1295, 1297, 1299, 1300, 1304a-b, 1307, 1323, 1349a-b, Ba, Bb, Bc, 1351, 1355a, 1355Ba.

¹¹¹ Standing Virtus with spear: *BMCRE Marc. Aur.* 605, 613, 622, 680, 1487-8; *RIC 3 Ant. Piu.* 305, 316, 323, 352, 354, 1115, 1118, 1424, 1488. Standing Virtus with trophy: *BMCRE Ant. Piu.* 379-82, 1262; *RIC 3 Ant. Piu.* 535-7, 1424-5. Cf. also Milhous 1992, 152-3.

¹¹² *BMCRE Marc. Aur.* 1711-14, 1723b, 1725, 1731; *RIC 3 Marc. Aur.* 1249-50.

¹¹³ *BMCRE Marc. Aur.* 1427; *RIC 3 Marc. Aur.* 1047-8.



Figure 184: Aurelian Profectio Panel Relief. Antonine period.

portrayed at the beginning of the visual narrative of the Column of Marcus Aurelius and clearly refers to the emperor setting out on campaign, or *profectio*, likely crossing the Danube in the north, before any battle has commenced.¹¹⁴ For, there is no indication that a battle has been won, no *Virtus*, no *Victoria*, no trophies, no prisoners of war, etc. Rather, the emperor is displaying his innate *virtus* which he takes with him to battle. This represents a visual motif of *virtus* which we have not yet seen, but one of paramount significance, since this is the only time in which the viewer is invited to witness the quality of *virtus* enter battle, rather than the victory which *virtus* bestows. We have to imagine that, when war

commenced with the enemy on the battlefield, the emperor pitched his *virtus* against the *virtus* of the enemy, the winner of which will emerge with his life, unfettered, and superior in *virtus*. Only then will the goddess *Virtus* materialize in order to side with the victor and lead him forth toward military glory and eternal fame. His *profectio* on the sesterius is reminiscent of the Aurelian Profectio Panel Relief, in which Marcus Aurelius departs from Rome in 169 for the Danube and traverses the Via Flaminia, accompanied by soldiers, *signiferi*, and two horses (Fig. 184). Just like the sesterius, there is no indication of victory, no *Victoria*, no *Virtus*, no *adventus*, no triumphal procession. Together, the sesterius and the Aurelian relief synthesize a narrative of the emperor's campaign to the Danube, in which he carries his martial courage with him to war.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Mattingly (1940, cxv, no. 3) states that there is no definitive reference to any one particular campaign; however, he posits that the scene could reference Marcus Aurelius' campaign against the Iazyges on the frozen Danube (cf. Dio 71.7). Birley (1987, 171) proposes that this references a campaign against the Marcomanni in 172. Cf. also Brilliant 1963, 145 and 144, fig. 3.100.

¹¹⁵ Kleiner (1992, 289) has mistakenly identified a *Virtus* figure in the scene. She does not specify which figure, but perhaps she misinterpreted the frontal-facing soldier, who wears a short tunic and carries a *vexillum* in his right hand, as *Virtus*.

Three years before Marcus Aurelius set out on campaign to the north, Lucius Verus procured a victory over the Parthians in 166 and celebrated a triumph in Rome with his co-ruler Marcus Aurelius.¹¹⁶ Only one image of the joint triumph of Lucius Verus and Marcus Aurelius survives, depicted on a bronze medallion minted by Lucius Verus. The portrait of Lucius Verus is emblazoned on the obverse. On the reverse, Lucius Verus and Marcus Aurelius ride in the car of their triumphal quadriga (**Fig. 185**).¹¹⁷ The co-emperors



Figure 185: Bronze medallion of Lucius Verus depicting a triumphal procession led by Virtus on the reverse. Antonine period.

hold a laurel branch and a scepter. In the background is a prisoner of war, who looks back toward the emperors, as well as a trophy of barbarian spoils, flanked by two fettered captives, sitting on a *ferculum*. Leading the quadriga in the triumph is Virtus, who marches forward but turns her head back toward the emperors, indicating that the goddess has sanctioned the emperors' victory and triumph, predicated on the *virtus* of Lucius Verus acquired in battle. She is dressed in her typical Amazonian tunic and crested helmet; and in lieu of a spear and *parazonium*, Virtus carries a shield in her right hand and a military standard in her left. We have seen Virtus carry a shield on Cancellaria Frieze A and she carries a standard on the Arcus Novus Relief (lending credence to the relief's Antonine date). Although we have not seen Virtus in a triumphal procession since the principate of Trajan (on the Arch of Trajan at Beneventum), the significance of Virtus in triumphal displays has never languished, especially since a triumph had not been celebrated by an emperor since Trajan.

Lucius Verus' Parthian victory is once more celebrated on another bronze medallion (**Fig. 186**).¹¹⁸ The reverse depicts a cuirassed Lucius Verus, offering a victoriola carrying a laurel wreath to Jupiter, who

¹¹⁶ *HA Marc. Aur. 12, Luc. Ver. 7-8*; Bishop 2018, 117.

¹¹⁷ Grueber 1874, 18, no. 2 and pl. 25, fig. 2; Gnechi 1912, 47, no. 17 and tav. 74, no. 4. Both erroneously identify Virtus as "Roma." Mittag (2009, 452) correctly identifies her as Virtus.

¹¹⁸ Gnechi 1912, 46, no. 15 and tav. 74, nos. 2-3. Gnechi identifies the Amazon goddess as "Roma" or "Minerva."



Figure 186: Bronze medallion of Lucius Verus featuring Jupiter, the emperor, and Virtus on the reverse. Antonine period.

sits on the Capitoline Hill with scepter and a bundle of lightning bolts. Directly behind the emperor is Virtus, who offers her support as she has led the emperor to his final destination, the Capitoline Hill, where he will deposit the laurels of victory in the Temple of Jupiter. Virtus wears a crested helmet and a short Amazonian tunic, double-belted, that unveils her right breast. In her right hand, she carries a spear. Although the medallion is not labeled, the identity of Virtus can be verified by the fact that this

is a scene of victory and that this is the end of the triumphal procession, which was guided by Virtus on the previous medallion of Lucius Verus. The composition is also reminiscent of Cancelleria Frieze A. There, Virtus guides Domitian to his final destination on the missing left slab, in which Victoria plays part (lending credence to Simon's theory that an enthroned Jupiter should fill the lacuna to the left-hand side of the scene).¹¹⁹ Nevertheless, Virtus has reprised her roll as divine guide of the emperor under Lucius Verus.

Ten years later, on the 23rd of December, 176, Marcus Aurelius and his son Commodus celebrated a joint triumph to commemorate his victories over the Germans and the Sarmatians, the campaigns of which are sculpted onto the Column of Marcus Aurelius in spiral relief.¹²⁰ In fact, the author of the *Historia Augusta* states that the triumph of Marcus Aurelius, joined by his son Commodus, successfully concluded the wars against the Marcomanni, the Sarmatians, the Vandals, and the Quadi – a war which no man could ever forget – freeing Pannonia from bondage, *cum virtute tum etiam felicitate*, “with not only *virtus*, but also with *felicitas*.”¹²¹ The passage suggests that *virtus* and *felicitas* were virtues of Marcus Aurelius, bequeathed to him upon his victory over the Germanic tribes, similar to the way in which *virtus* and *felicitas* were Trajanic virtues after his conquest of Dacia. Marcus Aurelius' triumph is not only

¹¹⁹ For Simon's theory, see Chapter III.E above.

¹²⁰ *HA Marc. Aur.* 16; *HA Comm.* 2.4, 12.5; *CIL* 6.1014; Birley 1987, 197.

¹²¹ *HA Marc. Aurel.* 17.



Figure 187: Bronze medallion of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus featuring a triumphal procession led by Virtus on the reverse. Antonine period.

memorialized on the Aurelian Triumph Panel Relief, in which Commodus was subsequently erased after his *damnato memoriae*, but also on a medallion minted by Marcus Aurelius, and later reproduced by Commodus, which features one of Marcus Aurelius' newly cultivated virtues: *virtus* (Fig. 187).¹²² Marcus Aurelius and Commodus ride in their triumphal quadriga, both brandishing a laurel branch. Victoria flies above the horses, carrying with her a laurel wreath, likely to be placed in the Temple of Jupiter

Capitolinus. The procession is guided by Virtus, who pulls the reins of the horses with her left hand. She carries a spear in her right hand and wears a crested helmet and a short Amazonian tunic that exposes her right breast. The goddess turns her head back to engage with the emperors, thus bestowing her divine gift that led the emperors to their victory over the northern barbarian tribes. This triumphal motif is consonant with those we have seen on the Medinaceli Reliefs, the Arch of Titus, the Vatican Relief, the Arch of Trajan at Benevento, indicating that the continuity of publicizing the *Virtus Augusti* remained integral to the visual narrative of the emperor's legacy. And, even though these medallions were only circulated among a few individuals, Marcus Aurelius assured that the *virtus Augusti* was visually broadcasted in Rome in conjunction with his northern victory.

Commodus never campaigned in warfare and never procured a victory or triumph during his own principate, thus, he had little choice but to claim *virtus* not through his own martial achievements but rather through his hunting achievements. Similar to way in which Hadrian acquired his *virtus Augusti*, Commodus also exercised his *virtus* through the hunt, namely in the arena during the *venationes*. On a series of aurei and sesterii, Commodus on horseback, dressed in a cuirass, military tunic, and

¹²² Marcus Aurelius: Gnechi 1912, 29, no. 19 and tav. 60, no. 7; Commodus: *idem* 67, no. 139 and tav. 87, no. 6. Gnechi mistakes Virtus for a soldier. Toynbee 1986, pl. 42.1; Hölscher 1967,87 and Taf. 8.10.



Figure 188: Aureus of Commodus featuring the hunt on the reverse. Commodian period.



Figure 189: Aureus of Commodus featuring the seated Virtus type on the reverse. Commodian period.



Figure 190: Sestertius of Commodus featuring Virtus with shield on the reverse. Commodian period.

paludamentum, attacks a lion with his spear (**Fig. 188**).¹²³ The legend *VIRT AVG* appears in the exergue. Although Commodus was not a soldier-emperor like his father, he minted a few Virtus coins featuring the Amazon goddess seated, likely to symbolize that the *Virtus Augusti* is still in the capital, where the emperor resides. Virtus, labeled *VIRTUS AVG*, wears a belted tunic that exposes her right breast and carries either a *parazonium* or a *victoriola* in her right hand, depending on the die (**Fig. 189**).¹²⁴

Commodus also began to strike standing Virtus coins with a new detail, namely the addition of a shield. On a series of sesterii, Virtus, identified by her legend *VIRTVTI AVG*, stands left and holds a *victoriola* in her right hand just as she does on the aureus above (**Fig. 190**).¹²⁵ She wears a crested helmet, a double-belted tunic that exposes her right breast, and pelt boots. She carries an upright spear in her left hand, which rests on the rim of a large round shield. The shield-bearing Virtus coupled with Victoria is not unprecedented. Preceded by Victoria in procession, Virtus carries a shield on Cancellaria Frieze A. And, below, Virtus is united with Victoria on the Aurelian Adventus Panel Relief, in which she also carries a shield during the arrival of Marcus Aurelius in Rome after earning his victory against the German and Sarmatian barbarians in the north.

¹²³ *BMCRE Comm.* 480, 562; *RIC 3 Comm.* 39, 114, 332a-b, 453a-b.

¹²⁴ *BMCRE Comm.* 91; *RIC 3 Comm.* 40-1, 292, 292Ah-j, 296j-k.

¹²⁵ *BMCRE Comm.* 227-8, 604; *RIC 3 Comm.* 160, 505, 510.



Figure 191: Bronze medallion of Commodus featuring the seated Virtus type with Victoria on the reverse. 186 CE.



Figure 192: Bronze medallion of Commodus featuring the seated Virtus type on the reverse. 183 CE.

Intriguingly, Commodus also struck two series of medallions that depict Virtus seated on a pile of armor in 183 and 186.¹²⁶ On the medallion of 186, Virtus, identified by the legend *VIRTVS AVG* in the exergue and dressed in a crested helmet and Amazonian tunic, is seated on a panoply of arms composed of two shields, a cuirass, and a crested helmet. Her right hand rests on the pile of armor and her left on the hilt of her *parazonium* (**Fig. 191**). In the background stands a trophy. Virtus turns her head around and gazes upon her partner in

victory scenes, Victoria, who carries a round shield. On the other medallion, a similar Virtus, identified by her legend *VIRTVTI AVG* in the exergue, is also seated on a pile of armor of which only the cuirass is displayed (**Fig. 192**).¹²⁷ She holds a spear in her right hand and cradles her *parazonium* in her left hand. To her left stands a military trophy that defines the scene as one of victory. The large round shield upon which

Virtus rests her right arm is decorated with the she-wolf and the twins Romulus and Remus, analogous to the iconography of Roma on the Column Base of Marcus Aurelius. This image of Virtus also casts doubt on the identification of the seated Roma type as “Roma” from the principate of Antoninus Pius onwards, especially on the Column Base of Antoninus Pius.¹²⁸ That Commodus minted several series of coins emphasizing the *virtus militaris* is striking for a non-military emperor. Commodus was likely claiming *virtus*

¹²⁶ Minted in 186. Gnechi 1912, 69, nos. 161-2 and Tav. 88, nos. 8-9.

¹²⁷ Minted in 183. Grueber 1874, 22, no. 8; Gnechi 1912, 69-70, no. 163 and Tav. 88, nos. 10.

¹²⁸ That Virtus, identified by her legend, is seated on a pile of armor and rests against a large round shield with a shield device that depicts the she-wolf and twins jeopardizes the identity of the Amazon goddess as Roma (not identified with inscription) on the Apotheosis of Antoninus Pius and Faustina Relief from the base of the Column of Antoninus Pius. Although the seated Amazon goddess is doubtless Roma, namely because her image is used as a location device just like the personification of the Campus Martius to the left, because the scene is not a military or victory event, and because Antoninus Pius was not a military emperor, it seems likely that Commodus was inspired by the iconography of the Apotheosis of Antoninus Pius and Faustina Relief for his seated Virtus motif, perhaps because he recognized the ideological relationship between acquiring military glory through the *virtus Augusti* that leads to the emperor’s divinization. See discussion below on the Apotheosis of Lucius Verus Relief below.



Figure 193: Aureus of Commodus featuring Mars or the emperor on the reverse. Commodian period.

from his father's military exploits against the Germans and the Sarmatians, the defeat of whom engendered a triumph for both Marcus Aurelius and Commodus. Commodus also minted an enigmatic coin that conveys *virtus*. On the reverse of an aureus, a nude Mars (?) (or the emperor?) stands left, save for his chlamys and Corinthian helmet (**Fig. 193**).¹²⁹ He holds a branch in his right hand and a spear and shield in his left hand. His right foot rests on a cuirass, symbolizing the defeat of Rome's enemies. The legend

identifies the scene as *VIRT[VS] AETER[NA] AVG[VSTI]*, "eternal *virtus* of the emperor." The context of the coin is unknown; however, the importance of *virtus* is clear as the emperor's cardinal military virtue that lasts for eternity.

V.VIII: The Aurelian Adventus Panel Relief



Figure 194: Aurelian Adventus Panel Relief. Antonine period.

Although *Virtus* does not appear on the Aurelian Triumph Panel Relief in which Commodus was later eradicated after his *damnatio memoriae* (likely because space is restricted on vertical reliefs), *Virtus* does appear on the Aurelian Adventus Panel Relief, in which Marcus Aurelius enters Rome as victor in his German and Sarmatian campaigns (**Fig. 194**). Marcus Aurelius, wearing a civilian tunic and heavy *paludamentum* enters Rome on foot during an *adventus*, attested by his movement past the Temple of Fortuna Redux in the Campus Martius and toward the Porta Triumphalis at the right, decorated with

¹²⁹ RIC 3 Comm. 242.

a festoon of victory laurel.¹³⁰ He arrives in Rome, escorted by only the divine. In the foreground, Marcus Aurelius is accompanied by the Roman emperor's martial triad: Mars, Victoria, and Virtus. In the background are two goddesses who brought him luck and good fortune during his campaign: a veiled Fortuna Redux and Felicitas with her cornucopia and caduceus, the latter conceptually paired with Virtus by Trajan. The movement of the emperor, as well as of Victoria away from Mars suggests that Marcus Aurelius is either leaving warfare behind or exiting the Campus Martius across the *pomerium* as he brings his victory into the capital. Virtus reprises her ideological role as the divine guide of the emperor in scenes of victory, as she leads Marcus Aurelius to the Porta Triumphalis.¹³¹ Virtus is mostly complete, except for her right arm. She wears an Attic helmet, the crest of which is supported by a reclining sphinx. Her Amazonian tunic is double-belted, cinched twice at the waist, that exposes her right breast. She wears a heavily-draped cloak, fastened with a *fibula* at her left shoulder and cascades across her left forearm, as well as open-toe pelt shoes. Slung across her right shoulder is a *balteus*, which, theoretically, supports a *parazonium* at her side; however, instead, it must support the rather large round shield behind her that is otherwise disconnected from her person. We have seen Virtus carry a round shield on Cancellaria Frieze A; and coins minted by Commodus depict Virtus with a shield at her side. In her left hand, Virtus carries a unique instrument of war, perhaps exclusive to Marcus Aurelius: a double-tipped lance with an upright leaf-tip head and a reverse quadripartite-edge tip. The attribute in her right hand is lost, but, she likely held her conventional sword, the *parazonium*.

The Amazon goddess turns her head back to visually engage with the emperor as she often does. However, she does not greet the emperor. There is no evidence of a *dextrarum iunctio* at the gates, as Roma greets Hadrian on the Hadrianic Adventus Relief; and, moreover, this is a martial-themed scene, not a non-military reception scene like the *adventus* of Hadrian, who never obtained a victory in warfare

¹³⁰ Ruysschaert 1962-1963, 113; Brilliant 1963, 147; Koeppel 1986, 70; Hannestad 1986, 232.

¹³¹ Identified as Virtus: Koeppel 1986, 70-1; Hannestad 1986, 232; Milhous 1992, 315-6; Identified as Roma: Hamberg 1945, 80; Brilliant 1963, 147; Hölscher 1967, 52; Ryberg 1967, 66; Oppermann 1985, 158; Kleiner 1992, 291.

while emperor. And the goddess' contrapposto stance and three-quarter turn to the right and away from the emperor indicate that she invites the emperor to follow her forward. Moreover, the union of Virtus, Victoria, and Mars personifies the emperor's military experience on the battlefield. Roma does not go to war, participate in war, or accompany the emperor back from war. Therefore, the Amazon goddess is not Roma; she is Virtus, not only on the basis of her iconography, but also on the basis of context. Seneca tells his readers that they can meet Virtus in front of the city walls, battered from war: "you will meet Virtus in her temple, in the forum, in the Curia, and standing dusty, blood-stained, and with calloused hands in front of the city walls."¹³² Although the original paint no longer exists on the reliefs, Virtus' appearance exemplifies not only martial valor, but also fortitude and resilience that arose from battle and resulted in victory (symbolized by Victoria flying behind the emperor). Virtus' physical presence represents the *virtus Augusti*, which is brought back to Rome to convey to the Roman people visual proof that Marcus Aurelius' martial capacity will destroy the enemy in battle, secure Rome's borders, protect the people, and extend the *pax Romana* throughout Rome.

V.IX: The Apotheosis of Lucius Verus from the Great Antonine Altar at Ephesus

The image of Virtus in victory compositions guarantees the safety and security of the Roman people. And, for the emperor, her image represents not only martial glory, but also the one virtue that only the emperor of Rome (and, by proxy, his family) can procure: divinity. The Aurelian Adventus Panel Relief anticipates Marcus Aurelius' imminent divinity, as Marcus Aurelius is the only mortal figure among the immortal gods. It is through the *virtus Augusti* that the Roman emperor triumphs not only in life, but also over death. *Virtus*, the pillar of victory and triumph, guides the emperor to apotheosis. And no other relief demonstrates the ideological symbiosis of *virtus* and deification more than the Apotheosis of Lucius Verus Relief from the Great Antonine Altar at Ephesus (**Fig. 195**). The relief is a part of the programmatic

¹³² Sen. *De Vit. Beat.* 7.2: *Virtutem in templo convenies, in foro, in curia, pro muris stantem, pulverulentam, coloratam, callosas habentem manus.*



Figure 195: The “Apotheosis of Lucius Verus Relief” from the Great Antonine Altar. Antonine period. Ephesus Museum, Vienna.

cycle of historical and myth-historical events celebrating the military accomplishments of Lucius Verus during his Parthian campaigns in 162-166, which ultimately led the emperor to his divinization in 169.¹³³ A

substantial part of the altar’s iconography visually conveys the victories of the military, commanded by Lucius Verus, over the Parthians, intimating Rome’s protection of the wealthy cities on the coast of Asia Minor from the barbarians of the east.¹³⁴ Moreover, Verus retained a special relationship with Ephesus, not only having spent much time there during his Parthian campaigns, but he also married Lucilla there in 164.¹³⁵ Hence, the martial valor of Verus and of his armies constituted in the altar’s battle scenes relays a message of safety and security to the Ephesian people, under the protection of the *virtus Augusti*.

¹³³ The identification of apotheosis was first proposed by Strong 1915, 90-1. Cf. also Kleiner 1992, 309-12; Engemann 1995; Liverani 1995; Elsner 1998, 124; Oberleitner 1995, 627-9; 2009, 253-4, 259-62; *Contra* Vermeule (1968, 107), who interprets the scene as a *profectio* of the divine Trajan. On reasons against a *profectio*, cf. Oberleitner 2009, 260-1. *Contra* Landskron (2006, 158-9), who believes that the scene is neither an apotheosis nor a *profectio*, but rather a departure of the ever-victorious emperor (unspecified) toward new challenges. However, the triumphal iconography, namely the appearance of Victoria/Nike and Virtus, indicate that a victory in warfare was already obtained. As I have demonstrated above, Victoria and Virtus are not visual prolepses for an impending war, but the products of a successfully concluded war. *Contra* Liverani (1995, 642), who believes that the emperor is Hadrian, not Lucius Verus; and *contra* Faust (2012, 333-7), who believes the emperor is Antoninus Pius. However, neither Hadrian nor Antoninus Pius were military emperors and did not campaign against the Parthians during their principates. Therefore, they did not earn a victory or triumph and the triumphal iconography of the Apotheosis Relief would be lost on them. Moreover, the senate dissented to Hadrian’s deification after his death, only pushed through by Antoninus Pius. The monument celebrates the victory over the Parthians during the Antonine Period, attested by the battle iconography; and the only Antonine emperor to have commanded the Roman army against the Parthians in the east was Lucius Verus, who not only celebrated a triumph for his victory in 166, but was also legitimately deified by the senate in 169. Therefore, that the emperor on the Apotheosis Relief is not Lucius Verus is rather indefensible.

¹³⁴ Price 1984, 158; Elsner 1998, 123-4.

¹³⁵ *HA Luc. Ver.* 2, 7; *Marc. Aurel.* 7, 9.

Verus was able to celebrate a triumph, jointly with Marcus Aurelius, in 166, which is reflected in the Apotheosis Relief. However, since Verus, who liberated the Ephesians from the Parthians, unexpectedly died in 169, the Greek sculptors who designed the relief revolutionized the iconography of a Roman triumph and created a composite composition that demonstrates not only Verus' triumph in life, but also his triumph over death. The relief not only depicts a visual commemoration of Verus' triumphal procession after his victory over the Parthians, but it also illustrates the apotheosis which was conferred upon Lucius by the senate at the behest of Marcus Aurelius in 169. The sculptures of the altar are not only stylistically conceived from the Hellenistic tradition, but the Greek sculptors also projected the Greek typology of apotheosis onto the Roman paradigm of triumph. Thus, the relief illustrates the apotheosis of the emperor that is predicated on his victory and triumph, the achievement of which is owed to the *virtus Augusti*.

The elements of the Roman triumph are transparent. Lucius Verus, whose head is missing, is dressed in a cuirass, a military tunic with decorative *pteryges*, and a *paludamentum* and mounts the car of his triumphal quadriga. Victoria, or rather, Nike flies by his side. She turns her head back to gaze at the emperor and places her right hand on the emperor's left arm, optically and physically joining Lucius Verus with his *victoria Augusti*. The leader of the triumphal procession is none other than Virtus, whose performative role it was to guide the victorious emperor forward and beyond. Here, she takes the reins of the horses as the agent of the triumphal emperor between victory and divinization.¹³⁶ Her head, too, is missing; however, we can deduce that, although she marches forward, she turned her head back toward the *triumphator*, creating a sightline between the goddess and the emperor to emphasize the emperor's intimate relationship with Virtus. She wears her typical pelt boots and a single-belted Amazonian tunic

¹³⁶ The identification of the Amazon goddess as Virtus is universally accepted with the exception of Ryberg (1955, 134), who identifies her as "Roma." Visual comparanda include the Medinaceli Reliefs, the Triumphator Relief of the Arch of Titus, the Vatican Relief, the triumphal procession from the Arch of Trajan at Beneventum, the triumphal medallions of Lucius Verus, of Marcus Aurelius, and of Commodus, the triumphal coinage of Septimius Severus, and the triumphal relief from the attic of the Quadrifrons of Septimius Severus at Lepcis Magna. Cf. also Oberleitner 2009, 254, no. 347.

that is slit open over her right thigh and chest to divest her right breast. She also wears a heavy *paludamentum* that encompasses her neck and cascades across the left side of her chest, her left shoulder, and her left arm. Her *paludamentum*, which is traditionally reserved for the emperor, is the same *paludamentum* that Verus wears, signifying not only that there is an inherent relationship between the emperor and Virtus, but also that they are setting out on a longer journey together, beyond the boundaries of Rome.



Figure 196: Bronze medallion of Antoninus Pius featuring the Apotheosis of Sol on the reverse. Antonine period.

Superimposed on the archetypal imagery of a Roman triumph are iconographical elements of a Greek apotheosis. This is substantiated by the fact that the relief is one of four reliefs comprising the altar's visual program of ascensions to the heavens in a divine chariot (the others of which include the ascensions of Artemis-Selene, of Apollo-Helios, and of an unidentified figure on a fragmentary fourth relief).¹³⁷ Furthermore, Lucius Verus' ascension on the Apotheosis

Relief is also corroborated by medallions minted by Antoninus Pius, Commodus, and an aureus minted by Septimius Severus in 197, depicting a radiant Sol ascending to the heavens. Riding on a bed of clouds, Sol departs from the earth, personified by the cornucopia-carrying Tellus, on his divine quadriga, led by a torch-bearer (Lucifer/Phosphoros) (**Fig. 196**).¹³⁸ On the Apotheosis Relief, Verus does not simply ride in his triumphal car, but he rather steps onto the divine car with his left foot, pushing himself off of the ground with his right leg, just as Sol does on the bronze medallion.¹³⁹ This mounting motif that demonstrates the transition from the secular to the divine through the lifting off of the ground, derives

¹³⁷ Engemann 1995; Oberleitner 2009, 116-24, 253-62; Faust 2012, 331-7.

¹³⁸ Antoninus Pius: Grueber 1874, 8, no. 7 and pl. 9, fig. 1; Engemann 1995, 637 and Taf. 159, no. 2; Toynbee 1967, 141 and pl. 19, no. 8. Commodus: Gnechi 1912, 52, nos. 3-4 and Tav. 78, nos. 3-4; Toynbee 1967, 141 and pl. 19, no. 9. Septimius Severus: *BMCRE Sept. Sev.* 226; *RIC 4 Sept. Sev.* 102; Carson 1978b, 76, no. 690.

¹³⁹ For Lucius Verus as a *Neos Helios* or a new Sun-God, cf. Simon, E. 1984. *LIMC II* 1, 83 f.s.v. Artemis/Diana, Nr. 280. Cf. also Engemann 1995; Landskron 2006, 159; Oberleitner 2009, 253; Faust 2012, 336.



Figure 197: Ricci Hydria depicting the apotheosis of Heracles, led by Hebe. Late-6th c. BCE.



Figure 198: West frieze of the Siphnian Treasury depicting the apotheosis of Heracles guided by Athena. Ca. 525 BCE.

from the iconography of 6th-century Greek vases that depict the celestial ascent of Heracles during his apotheosis. On the black-figure Ricci Hydria (ca. 525), for example, Hebe mounts the divine chariot with one foot on the car and her other on the ground (**Fig. 197**). She clutches the arm of Heracles, rousing the hero

to immortality, similar to the way in which Nike grasps the arm of Verus on the Apotheosis Relief.¹⁴⁰

This mounting motif during Heracles' apotheosis is also demonstrated in relief. On

the west frieze of the

Siphnian Treasury (ca. 525 BCE), an aegis-bearing Athena mounts her divine quadriga, comprising four winged horses, guided by Hermes as psychopomp (**Fig. 198**). She places her right foot on the car, whereas, her left leg (now lost) rests on the ground. Behind her follows Heracles as he prepares for his celestial journey with his tutelary deity toward immortality.¹⁴¹ And since Heracles, or rather, the Roman Hercules, was considered an icon of martial excellence, i.e. *virtus*, to the Romans, it is permissible to surmise that

¹⁴⁰ For an analysis on the iconographical program of the Ricci Hydria, cf. Cerchiai, L. 1995. *Il Programma Figurativo dell'Hydria Ricci*. *Antike Kunst*, 38. Jahrg., H.2., pp. 81-91.

¹⁴¹ For the apotheosis of Herakles on the Siphnian Treasury, cf. Homolle, T. 1894. *Nouvelles et Correspondance*. *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* Vol. 18, pp. 175-200; Brinkmann, V. 1994. *Beobachtungen zum Formalen Aufbau und zum Sinngehalt der Frieze des Siphnierschatzhauses*. Biering & Brinkmann, Ennepetal; Neer, R. 2001. *Framing the Gift: The Politics of the Siphnian Treasury at Delphi*. *Classical Antiquity*, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 273-328, especially 318-9.

the iconography of the apotheosis of Heracles influenced the Apotheosis Relief as a scene of the emperor's victory, triumph, and inherent *virtus*.



Figure 199: Belvedere Altar depicting the apotheosis of a Julio-Claudian. From the principate of Augustus. Vatican Museums.

The horses on the Apotheosis Relief are not winged as they are on the Siphnian Treasury; however, they raise their front legs at an upward incline and away from the earth below, personified by the goddess Tellus, who reclines on the ground.¹⁴² Tellus bears her right breast, carries an infant on her lap, and holds a cornucopia in her left hand, symbolizing that Verus is leaving the secular realm a fecund, abundant, and prosperous place for the people of Asia Minor, granted by his triumph over foreign barbarism and its threat to

the continuity of the *pax Romana* in the east. Behind Virtus is a male figure wearing a radiant crown and wielding a torch. He has been interpreted as Helios, whom Verus approaches during his ascension, or Phosphoros (Lucifer), who illuminates the celestial journey of the emperor through the sky.¹⁴³ The iconography is commensurate with the Antoninus Pius medallion depicting the ascension of Sol, as well as with the so-called Belvedere Altar (**Fig. 199**). On one side of the altar, a Julio-Claudian dynastic family member rises to the heavens toward a male divinity (Jupiter? Uranus?) on a divine car pulled by ascending horses. Another divine quadriga already flies high in the sky, perhaps carrying a deified ancestor, such as the divine Caesar, or another deity, such as Apollo or Artemis – both of whom ascend in the apotheosis

¹⁴² For Tellus, cf. Toynbee 1967, 141 and pl. 32, no. 3.

¹⁴³ Helios: Vermeule 1968, 107; Price 1984, 159; Kleiner 1992, 311; Milhous 1992, 313; Engemann 1995; Liverani 1995, 642. Phosphoros: Oberleitner 1995, 628, 2009, 254, 260; Landskron 2006, 159; Faust 2012, 333.

cycle on the Great Antonine Altar. The deification on the Belvedere Altar establishes a Roman, and, more specifically, a Julio-Claudian precedent for the apotheosis-via-chariot motif.¹⁴⁴

The iconography of the Apotheosis of Lucius Verus Relief is a composite composition of a Roman triumph and a Greek apotheosis. The relief is unique as it combines a formulaic celebration of the emperor's military accomplishments that culminates with a triumph, synthesized with a Greek understanding of his deification for a Greek audience in Ephesus. These composite scenes in the Roman east that conserve Greek visual traditions and are embedded within the framework of Roman institutions are not unprecedented. I have already discussed the Aphrodisian Monument of Zoilos, who desired to demonstrate his purely Roman qualities of *honos* and *virtus* on his mausoleum but redefined the identifications of a male Honos and an Amazon Virtus as a female Timē and a matronly Andreia to conform to a Greek understanding of these Roman ideological values. Moreover, the Athenian Monument of Philopappos – a Greek-speaking aristocrat from the east, who not only served as an archon in Athens, but was later appointed by Trajan as praetor and, subsequently, a Roman suffect consul of 109 – incorporates a Roman triumph motif reserved for the emperor in which Philopappos rides in a triumphal quadriga led by a retinue of Roman lictors.¹⁴⁵ However, Philopappos was neither an emperor nor a *triumphator*. Nevertheless, Philopappos recontextualized the iconography of a Roman triumph on his Athenian mausoleum of Hellenistic architectural form to amplify the achievements of his political career for a Greek audience. The Greeks' visual memory must have recalled a Greek apotheosis scene via chariot to heaven,

¹⁴⁴ Zanker, P. 1969. *Der Larenaltar im Belvedere des Vatikans*. *Römische Mitteilungen* 76, pp. 205-218; *idem*. 1988, 220-1. For a different interpretation of the iconography of the altar, cf. Buxton, B. 2014. *A New Reading of the Belvedere Altar*. *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 118, No. 1, pp. 91-111. Buxton, however, argues against a deification for the Julio-Claudian on the relief. She believes the relief depicts Drusus, who was not deified, but that the scene still references his funeral in 9 BCE. However, the iconography of ascension in a quadriga, pulled by winged horses and surrounded by deities, is formulaic and indicates an apotheosis. Any ancient viewer of a divine ascension of an imperial family member would immediately recognize the scene as one of divinization. Suggesting that the ascension scene is only vaguely funerary with no intention of deification would be lost on the viewer.

¹⁴⁵ For a comprehensive study of the Monument of Philopappos, cf. Kleiner, D.E.E. 1983. *The Monument of Philopappos in Athens*. *Archaeologica* 30, Rome. Cf. also Paus. 1.25.8. Brilliant (1963, 128) describes the scene as a consular procession (*processus*). That may be the case for the event; however, the iconography is unequivocally triumphal (Brilliant does compare it to the Arch of Titus), appropriated to amplify his political achievements, albeit with the use of a Roman template for martial victory.

especially on a monumental mausoleum that already immortalizes the memory of Philopappos.¹⁴⁶ This iconographical appropriation is analagous to the way in which the Roman triumph was recontextualized on the Apotheosis of Lucius Verus Relief, underscoring Lucius Verus' martial achievements that ultimately engendered his deification after his death. The martial glory of the emperor that leads to his deification is best represented in Rome by the Arch of Titus, on which the emperor is led by Virtus through triumph – the hallmark of glory achieved by a Roman – and again to apotheosis on the back of an eagle at the apex of the arch's vault. And the sculptors of the Apotheosis of Lucius Verus Relief visualized the same ideological consequence of an emperor's martial glory through his triumph of 166 that led to his deification after his death in 169. However, the Roman apotheosis via eagle was replaced by a Greek apotheosis in a chariot. This created a visual display of the emperor's triumph in life and triumph over death that was comprehensible to the Ephesian viewer, who would have easily recognized the Greek elements of apotheosis: the lifting of only one leg onto the car, the ascension of the horses, as well as the Greek torch-bearer Helios or Phosphoros as the guiding light to the heavens.

Conversely, the relief was also made by a sculptor knowledgeable in Roman symbolism to appeal to the Roman viewer, who would have recognized the elements of triumph, namely the *triumphator* in a chariot, the escort of victory as Nike/Victoria, and the presence of Virtus as herald of the emperor, whose image would not be so well understood by the Greeks, since images of the goddess as an Amazon warrior do not yet exist in the Greek world.¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the commissioner of the relief understood the significance of Roman Virtus, or rather, Virtus Augusti, in not only visual commemorations of the Roman triumph as divine herald of the emperor, but also in her performative role as the divine force that guides the emperor to the heavens during his apotheosis, predicated on his martial glory. Virtus' role as the

¹⁴⁶ For its Hellenistic architectural details cf. Vermeule 1968, 81-2. Cf. also Mittag (2009, 451-2) for the monument's triumphal symbolism.

¹⁴⁷ An Amazon Andreia first appears on the so-called Coronation of Septimius Severus relief from Hierapolis, see discussion below in Chapter VI.C

emperor's divine navigator to the heavens is corroborated by a passage in Statius (discussed above) and (one in Silius Italicus, discussed below), in which he designates Virtus as the goddess who descends from the side of Jupiter in the celestial regions of the universe to the earth and chooses men whom she deems worthy to become the stars which she alone places as stars in the sky.¹⁴⁸ Thus, the Apotheosis of Lucius Verus Relief is a conflated narrative that demonstrates the two ideological roles of Virtus created by the Romans. She appears in her physical form and assumes both her role as herald of a cuirassed Lucius Verus in triumph after he procured both *victoria Augusti* and *virtus Augusti* during his campaigns against the barbarian Parthians, as well as her role as divine leader to the celestial realm, where Lucius Verus will reside as one of the stars Virtus fixes to the sky after his apotheosis in 169. The relief eloquently visualizes the ideological consequences of acquiring a reputation in *virtus* on the battlefield, namely the military glory and respect, fame, and the legitimization of the principate of the emperor – who was held accountable for his protection of the Roman people under his sword and shield – that will ultimately grant his deification. The presence of Virtus was necessary for the Roman emperor, who needed her image to prove that he was an emperor of the *virtus Augusti*, the value of which would lead him toward divinization and eternal memory. And the goddess' presence was also necessary for the Roman people, whose divine image provided validation of the emperor's worth as *defensor* and *προστάτης* not only of Ephesus, but also of the entire Roman empire, left in prosperity and abundance upon his death and rebirth as a new light in the night sky.

¹⁴⁸ Stat. *Theb.* 10.632-8. Cf. also Ch. III.C.

Chapter VI: The Goddess Virtus and the Severan Dynasty

VI.I: The *Virtus Augustorum* of the Severans



Figure 200: Aureus of Septimius Severus featuring Virtus on the reverse. Ca. 198 CE.

No single event accelerated the production of Virtus coinage more than civil war as proof of martial power, attested by the year of the four emperors in 69 and now, again, by the year of the five emperors in 193, during which Septimius Severus emerged as victor in the wars against the usurpers of the crown. Septimius was always a *vir militaris*. He held a quaestorship in Rome and, subsequently, one in Hispania. He was then assigned the province of Sardinia to quell the invasion of the Moors, before being reassigned to the assistance of the proconsul of Africa. Consequently, he was promoted to tribune of the plebs by Marcus Aurelius; and when he was 32, Marcus Aurelius appointed him praetor and sent him to Spain, where he commanded a legion. He then commanded in the province of Lugdunensis as legate. Under the principate of Commodus, Septimius was made consul and was sent to Pannonia with proconsular power. That Septimius personally pursued a *rem militarem* is clear, as stated by the author of the *Historia Augusta*.¹ After Septimius ascended the throne, the Roman mint began to strike coins depicting Virtus. An aureus struck in the first few months of his principate illustrates a laureate Septimius on the obverse and Virtus on the reverse (**Fig. 200**).² The legend *VIRT AVG TRP COS* identifies her more specifically as *Virtus Augusti*.³ The iconography of Virtus is unremarkable, yet impressively articulated on the aureus. Virtus wears her canonical crested helmet, a double-belted Amazonian tunic that divests her right breast, a mantle that hangs over her left shoulder and arm, and a pair of pelt boots. In her left hand, she grasps a reverse spear and in her right a victoriola

¹ *Hist. Aug.* (2-5). Cf. also Birley 1972, 81-96.

² *BMCRE Sept. Sev.* 33-5; *RIC 4 Sept. Sev.* 24, 39.

³ *VIRT AVG TRP COS* = *Virtus Augusti*, *Tribunicia Potestas* (tribunician power), *Consul*.

offers Virtus her laurel wreath. The Virtus-with-victoriola motif, emulating those of Nero, Galba, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Lucius Verus, and Commodus, continues the role that *virtus* was assigned to the emperor in the event of victory, as well as the intimate martial relationship Virtus shared with Victoria. In fact, Mattingly notes, in his observations of Virtues in Severan numismatics, that the two most important imperial Virtues of Septimius Severus were the military Virtues of Victoria and Virtus, as “it is by them that Emperor and Empire stand.”⁴ It is made transparent by the iconography of Septimius’ victorious Virtus coin, as well as by the preponderance of military themed coinage, that his martial success led him to Rome as emergent *imperator* – his first imperial acclamation proclaimed by the German legions on the Ides of April, 193.⁵

Subsequently, Septimius arrived to Rome on horseback and entered the city on foot during his first *adventus*, the spectacle of which was celebrated with elaborate pomp, according to Dio. Septimius, accompanied by the entire army and cavalry in full armor, was greeted by the people who offered him laurels as the first *imperator* to have achieved honors of victory without bloodshed; and the senate proclaimed him emperor on June 1st, 193.⁶ However, civil strife was far from over for Septimius. Pescennius Niger, governor of Syria, was proclaimed *imperator* by his legions in Syria.⁷ Having spent only 30 days in Rome, Septimius departed for the east, where a civil war ensued. Prematurely, Niger minted a series of Virtus coins struck in Antioch, even though victory was yet to be definitively achieved. However, it is not the goddess herself who graces the reverse of his denarius, but the claimant himself in the pose of Virtus (**Fig. 201**).⁸ The denarius features Niger in a *Standmotiv* and facing right. He wears a crested helmet, cuirass with military tunic, and carries a spear and round shield. The surrounding legend reads

⁴ Mattingly 1950, xlv, lxxxiii.

⁵ *HA Sept. Sev.* 5; Mattingly 1950, lxxix; Rubin 1980, 201.

⁶ Dio 75 (74).1; Herod. 2.14.

⁷ *HA Sept. Sev.* 6; Dio 74 (73).17; Birley 1972, 163.

⁸ *BMCRE Pesc. Nig.* 317; *RIC 4 Pesc. Nig.* 92-3. The *virtus* of Pescennius Niger was also lauded by Marcus Aurelius, according to the author of the *Historia Augusta* (*Pesc. Nig.* 4).



Figure 201: Denarius of Pescennius Niger minted in Antioch, featuring the emperor with the legend *VIRTVTI AVG*. 193 CE.

VIRTVTI AVG, which is indicative of the fact that Niger claimed to be the physical embodiment of *virtus* itself. This imperial metamorphosis is not unprecedented during civil war. Galba also represented himself in the manner of Virtus with identifying legend *VIRTUS*; and Vespasian, Domitian, Trajan, Hadrian, and Antoninus Pius also depicted themselves in the pose of Virtus, albeit without identifying legend, likely to avoid *hybris*. Nevertheless, the *virtus* of Niger did not produce a victory for him on the battlefield at Nicaea against Septimius in 194.⁹

In the military contest in *virtus*, the *virtus* of Septimius overcame that of Niger, which resulted in the license to display the goddess Virtus on his subsequent coinage, to visually claim that the goddess was on his side, that of the victor. Later, after he was declared *imperator* for the third time after the battle at Nicaea, Septimius began to mint in Rome his second issue of Virtus coins with the same iconography as his first issue with *victoriola* and spear. And the eastern mints struck Virtus coins with spear and *parazonium* with the legend *VIRTVTE AVG* in the ablativ, perhaps, implying that his victories were won “by the *virtus* of the emperor.”¹⁰ Moreover, the mint in Alexandria struck a seated Virtus type, identified by the legend *VIRTUS AVG*, in which Virtus is seated on a pile of armor and holds a *parazonium* in her left hand and a *victoriola* in her right.¹¹ Once Niger was defeated at Issus in 194, the Roman state collectively rallied behind Septimius.¹² His new empire, once ruptured by the volatility of civil strife, saw a cessation of internal warfare and was restored to a state of stability and peace, attested by his *PACI AVGVSTI* coinage of 194, which may have not been possible if it were not for his *virtus militaris*.¹³

⁹ *HA Sept. Sev.* 8; Dio 75 (74).4.

¹⁰ Rome: *BMCRE Sept. Sev.* 73b, 478, 510; *RIC 4 Sept. Sev.* 39. Eastern mints: *BMCRE Sept. Sev.* 403-4; *RIC 4 Sept. Sev.* 431, 431A.

¹¹ *BMCRE Sept. Sev. Alexandria* 327c; *RIC 4 Sept. Sev.* 350I.

¹² Dio 74 (73).7; Herod. 3.4; Birley 1972, 178.

¹³ *BMCRE Sept. Sev.* 70-1, 85; *RIC 4 Sept. Sev.* 37, 54.

As a *vir militaris*, it is not surprising that Septimius' first issues of coins celebrated his military might through his victories, his relationship with the legions, and his martial prowess. *Virtus* was, by now, expected of the emperor, being the singular virtue that sustained his ability to lead by the recognition and respect it commanded. Septimius acknowledged that he needed the full support of Rome's armies to make his principate last; and he knew that the only way to gain their patronage and loyalty was through *victoria* and *virtus* – the bedrock of sovereignty, especially one of a new dynasty. However, the *virtus* he had claimed during the civil wars was not enough. It may have established his position at the pinnacle of Rome's military hierarchy as Rome's sole *imperator*; however, it did not establish a reputation in martial fame and glory, since it may not have yet been recognized by the Roman people. It was not considered glorious by the people of Rome for an emperor to claim *virtus* from domestic contention. Martial glory, fame, and eternal memory through *virtus* needed to be obtained in a foreign land, against a foreign people, one with estimable *virtus*, that could and would threaten the hegemony of Rome. Caesar found no martial glory for himself in his war with Pompey, but found his *virtus* in Gaul. Vespasian knew that there was no martial glory in civil rivalries, but found his *virtus* in Judaea. Augustus in Alexandria. Claudius in Britannia. Domitian in Pannonia. Trajan in Dacia. Marcus Aurelius in Pannonia. Lucius Verus in Parthia. Thus, Septimius recognized that if he were ever going to establish a reputation in martial fame and glory in the memory of the Roman people to compete with the memory of his greatest predecessors, he would have to test his *virtus* on the foreign battlefield against a formidable adversary of Rome and win.

While Septimius was still in the east after his victory over Niger and during a siege in Byzantium, he was presented with the opportunity to acquire the military glory he desired that would validate his *virtus* with the people of Rome. The Roman-protected outpost of Nisibis was attacked by three peoples that had given aid to Niger – the Osroeni, Adiabeni, and the Scenite Arabs, against whom Septimius

waged war.¹⁴ Moreover, Dio states that Septimius “waged this war against these barbarians out of a desire for glory” (κατὰ τῶν βαρβάρων ἐπιθυμία δόξης ἐστράτευσε).¹⁵ Therefore, in the spring of 195, Septimius launched an invasion of Mesopotamia, where, as Birley asserts, “it would have been politic to gain some success over a foreign enemy after more than a year of civil war.”¹⁶ This was an opportune moment in his principate to expand Rome’s hegemony toward a Parthia enervated by Lucius Verus. In the course of this war against these Mesopotamian tribes, Septimius procured three victories and, subsequently, received the acclamation of *imperator* for the fifth, sixth, and seventh time.¹⁷ He also assumed the new titles of *Parthicus*, *Arabicus* and *Adiabenicus*, which appear on his coinge of 195.¹⁸



Figure 202: Sestertius of Septimius Severus featuring Virtus crowning the emperor on the reverse. 195 CE.

Septimius was offered a triumph for his victory in Mesopotamia; however, he rejected it, lest it appear as if the triumph were celebrated on account of the civil wars, according to the author of the *Historia Augusta*.¹⁹ Consequently, having gained some martial esteem on the foreign battlefield, Septimius minted a new series of Virtus coins with new iconography for his fifth imperial acclamation.

On the reverse of a sestertertius, Virtus, wearing a crested helmet, double-belted Amazonian tunic and carrying a *parazonium*, crowns Septimius with a wreath of laurel (Fig. 202).²⁰ The cuirassed emperor carries a transverse spear in his left hand, and in his right hand he holds a victoriola alighting on a globe. Virtus is identified by the legend *VIRTVTI AVG*, written in the dative, thus indicating a thank-offering to the goddess whose divine gift made the emperor’s victory possible. His *virtus*, or rather his ἀνδρεία, acquired in his martial achievements over the barbarians was even

¹⁴ Birley 1972, 181. *HA Sept. Sev.* 9.

¹⁵ Dio 75 (74).15.

¹⁶ Birley 1972, 181; Dio 75 (74).15.

¹⁷ Birley 1972, 182.

¹⁸ *HA (Sept. Sev. 9)*, which also states that Septimius Severus rejected the title of Parthicus lest he offend the king of Parthia; however, it remained a title in the coinage. Cf. also Mattingly 1950, lxxxviii-lxxxix, xci; Birley 1972, 182.

¹⁹ *HA Sept. Sev.* 9.

²⁰ *BMCRE Sept. Sev.* 562-3, 702a-b (unlabeled); *RIC 4 Sept. Sev.* 693.

mentioned by Dio.²¹ And soon after the conclusion of the wars against the Osrhoeni, Adiabeni, and the Scenite Arabs, Septimius proclaimed himself to be the son of the divine Marcus Aurelius, thereby associating himself with Marcus Aurelius' martial legacy.²²



Figure 203: Aureus of Septimius Severus featuring the adventus of the emperor, guided by Virtus. 195 CE.

Even though Virtus had assumed a new role in crowning the emperor (although Virtus/Andreia once crowned Venus of Aphrodisias on Panel C17 of the Sebasteion Reliefs), she reprises her performative duty as the emperor's guide to glory in scenes of victory. After the successful conclusion of the war in Mesopotamia and the siege at Byzantium in late 195, Septimius received his eighth imperial acclamation and returned to Rome.²³ Aurei and sesterii were minted in Rome to celebrate the emperor's homecoming. On an

aureus celebrating Septimius' *adventus* in 195, the cuirassed emperor arrives in Rome on horseback, guided by Virtus (**Fig. 203**). Wearing her conventional Amazonian tunic that bares her right breast, the goddess pulls the reins of the emperor's horse with her right hand and she holds a military *vexillum* with her left.²⁴ The legend reads *ADVENTVI AVG FELICISSIMO*, thereby indicating a relationship between the emperor, his *adventus*, *virtus*, and *felicitas*, akin to the way in which Trajan united Virtus and Felicitas on his Virtus coinage and Marcus Aurelius on the Aurelian Adventus Panel Relief.

Although the triumph and *adventus* were not considered ideologically synonymous, the *adventus* was understood as a visual expression of victory.²⁵ But Septimius was not the first emperor to depict his *adventus* in a triumphal manner. Cancelleria Relief A, although truly a presentation of an *ovatio*, can be

²¹ Dio 75 (74).15.4.

²² Birley 1972, 184; *HA Sept. Sev.* 10; *BMCRE* 550c, 567-74.

²³ Birley 1972, 187; Herod. 3.6.9.

²⁴ *BMCRE Sept. Sev.* 150-6; 595-597; *RIC 4 Sept. Sev.* 73, 719a-c; Brilliant 1963, 174, Fig. 4.29.

²⁵ Brilliant 1963, 174.

understood as a victorious *adventus* which occurred when Domitian returned from Pannonia, escorted by Virtus. The Great Trajanic Frieze depicts a triumph-like *adventus* of Trajan through the gates of Rome, guided by Victoria and Virtus. And the Aurelian Adventus Panel Relief represents the most detailed of triumphal *adventus* scenes, visualizing the emperor's homecoming with Mars, Fortuna Redux, Felicitas, Victoria, and led by Virtus to the gates of Rome, in which Marcus Aurelius is practically divinized from his military glory as an equal among the gods. Nevertheless, the coins of Septimius demonstrate the dissolving visual distinctions between the definition of a victorious triumph and the definition of a victorious *adventus*. In either case, Virtus is the common denominator that binds the emperor to his victory and characterizes the emperor's martial glory during either a triumph-like *adventus* or an *adventus*-like triumph to be discerned by the people for public recognition. In any case, Septimius acquired the *δόξα* that Dio claims he desired to obtain in his campaigns against the peoples of Mesopotamia.

Contingent upon the emperor's *virtus* secured during the civil wars and, again, during his first conquest of the barbarians, Septimius also struck coins that advertised the *SECVRITAS PVBLICA*, promising the safety of the people under the protection of his *virtus Augusti*.²⁶ Concomitantly, coins celebrating *SECVRITAS PERPETVA* and *SPEI PERPETVAE* were struck on behalf of Caracalla as "Caesar" and as the *princeps iuventutis*, indicating that the *virtus Augusti* was to be transferred to his son as his proclaimed heir and that the people's safety and hope will continue under the *virtus* of the Severan dynasty.²⁷

Unfortunately for Septimius, the *virtus* of the Severan dynasty was once again challenged by a new claimant, this time by Clodius Albinus, Septimius' original Caesar and possible heir, who felt snubbed by the emperor's decision to proclaim Caracalla as heir in 196. Another civil war ensued; and Albinus, supported by the legions in Britain and Spain, which proclaimed him *imperator*, minted his own Virtus

²⁶ *BMCRE Sept. Sev.* 174-6.

²⁷ *BMCRE Sept. Sev.* 181-192; Birley 1972, 181-2; *HA Sept. Sev.* 10.

coinage in Lugdunum, challenging the *virtus Augusti* of Septimius.²⁸ Albinus chose the archetypal representation of Virtus with *parazonium* and spear with the legend *VIRTVTI AVG*. Nonetheless, his series of coins that feature the image of Virtus stresses the importance of proclaiming martial prowess during civil war. But Albinus' claim to *virtus* was unfounded. Septimius decimated Albinus' armies; and, according to Herodian, Albinus "was defeated by his [Septimius Severus'] *virtus*" (*χειρωσάμενον ἀνδρείᾳ*).²⁹ Hiding in Lugdunum, Albinus took his own life, extinguishing his own *virtus* on the 19th of February, 197.³⁰ Thereafter, Virtus remained on the side of the victor, Septimius.

The *virtus* of Septimius was not given a rest, however. According to the *Historia Augusta*, Septimius was planning a war against the Parthians, "launched not out of any necessity, but for his desire for glory" (*gloriae cupiditate non aliqua necessitate deductum*).³¹ Herodian corroborates Septimius' sentiments by writing that the emperor wanted to acquire glory (*δόξαν*) for himself from his victories in civil war, for which he was ashamed to celebrate a triumph, by erecting the trophies of the barbarians" (*κατὰ βαρβάρων ἐγεῖραι τρόπαια*).³² Since the trophy was a physical analogue for the *virtus* of the emperor, it can be construed that Septimius' goal was to legitimize his martial capacity by conquering a foreign nation, the *virtus* from which would result in the acquisition of not only glory, but also the respect an emperor required to maintain power. But his pursuit of martial glory was, nevertheless, again justified, lest he wage unnecessary wars against foreign peoples that posed no immediate danger to the Roman people and claim unwarranted *virtus* like Domitian. While the emperor was in Germany and Pannonia on his way back to Rome, he received word that the Parthians had invaded the Mesopotamian province which he created after the conclusion of the tribal wars.³³ On his arrival into Syria in the summer of 197,

²⁸ *BMCRE Sept. Sev.* 278b; *RIC 4 Sept. Sev.* 48-9.

²⁹ Herod. 3.7.

³⁰ *HA Sept. Sev.* 10-1. Cf. Birley (1972, 189-95) for the war against Albinus.

³¹ *HA Sept. Sev.* 15.

³² Herod. 3.9.

³³ Birley 1972, 198; *HA Sept. Sev.* 12; Dio 76 (75).9.

Septimius crossed the Euphrates and headed for Nisibis.³⁴ The Parthians, however, withdrew. Having secured the region, Septimius marched his legions to the Parthian capital Ctesiphon on the Tigris, which he successfully besieged and captured on the 28th of January, 198.³⁵ As many as 100,000 Parthians were captured and imprisoned, according to Dio.³⁶

Subsequently, Septimius accepted his eleventh and final acclamation of *imperator*, as well as the title *Parthicus Maximus*; and he had his troops proclaim Caracalla as “Augustus,” receiving tribunician power at the age of 12. Geta, on the other hand, was named “Caesar,” thereby officially establishing the Severan family dynasty.³⁷ When Septimius returned to Syria, news of his victories was dispatched to Rome, where the senate decreed for Septimius a triumph; however, gout prevented him from standing upright in a chariot and, therefore, he declined a triumph for himself. Nevertheless, he conceded the triumph to Caracalla; and the senate decreed for Caracalla a Judaeian triumph on behalf of his father’s victory over Parthia.³⁸ Whether Septimius or Caracalla celebrated a triumph in the east is not attested by the literary sources; however, issues of coins minted at Nikopolis and at Mytiline suggest that a triumphal celebration took place. The reverse of a coin emblazoned with the laureate head of Septimius on the obverse and



another with the head of a young Caracalla wearing the lionskin of Hercules depict a triumphal procession (Figs. 204, 205).³⁹ Two figures ride in the triumphal car, presumably Septimius and Caracalla.

Figure 204: Coin from Nikopolis featuring Septimius Severus on the obverse and a Severan triumph, led by Virtus on the reverse. Ca. 198 CE.

The car is decorated with a relief of Victoria who

³⁴ Birley 1972, 202.

³⁵ *HA Sept. Sev.* 16; Dio 76 (75).9; Herod. 3.9.

³⁶ Dio 76 (75).9.

³⁷ *HA Sept. Sev.* 16; Herod. 3.9; Birley 1972, 202.

³⁸ *HA Sept. Sev.* 16; Birley 1972, 215.

³⁹ *AMNG 1 Nikopolis* 1327 (pg. 368) (Pick, B. 1898. *Die Antiken Münzen Nord-Griechlands, unter Leitung von F. Imhoof-Blumer*, Band 1 (*Die Antiken Münzen von Dacien und Moesien*). Druck und Verlag von Georg Reimer, Berlin.). Varbanov 2670-1 (Varbanov, I. 2005. *Greek Imperial Coins and their Value*. Vol. 1: Dacia, Moesia Superior, Moesia Inferior, Adicom. The same or similar die was also used by Macrinus: *AMNG 1 Nikopolis* 1712 (pg. 440). For Caracalla, see Varbanov 2431. Rowan (2012, 89) also identifies the figure leading the quadriga as Virtus.



Figure 205: Coin from Nikopolis featuring Caracalla on the obverse and a Severan triumph, led by Virtus on the reverse. Ca. 198 CE.



Figure 206: Bronze medallion from Mytilene featuring a Severan triumph, led by Virtus on the reverse. Ca. 198 CE.

proffers a laurel crown. Above the quadriga stands a trophy flanked by two fettered Parthians in Parthian caps resting on a *ferculum*. The quadriga is led by a figure who pulls the reins of the quadriga with the right hand and carries a *vexillum* in the left hand. The hilt of a sword projects from the left hip. The helmeted figure turns back toward the emperor to catch his gaze. Numismatists have interpreted the figure to be a Roman soldier; however, the composition is derivative, adopted from the triumph led by Virtus created for the medallions of Marcus Aurelius, Lucius Verus, and Commodus – the Antonine

dynasty with which Septimius aligned himself. The figure can be none other than Virtus, who leads the emperor toward triumph. A bronze coin from Mytilene depicts the young Caracalla on the obverse and a similar triumphal scene on the reverse, except that Caracalla alone rides in the triumphal chariot (Fig. 206).⁴⁰ The quadriga is guided, once again, by Virtus, who also carries a *vexillum* and whose Amazonian tunic is better represented here than on the coins from Nikopolis. Virtus also carries the *vexillum* like Septimius' *adventus* series, thereby lending credence to the identity of the goddess as Virtus.⁴¹ Although there exists no literary reference to a Severan triumph, these coins minted in the eastern mints suggest that Caracalla was involved in some sort of triumphal procession (more likely than not a triumphal *adventus*, perhaps on his visit to Moesia) on behalf of his father's victory over Parthia, just as the *Historia*

⁴⁰ BMC Lesbos (Mytilene) 212-3 and Pl. 41.9 (Wroth, W. 1894. *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Troas, Aeolis, and Lesbos*. British Museum, London.).

⁴¹ Caracalla did mint a few series of coins that illustrate him as a boy in a triumphal quadriga; however, Virtus is not depicted: RIC 4 Carac. 77, 87a-c, 103, 104.

Augusta asserts. Nevertheless, the *virtus Augusti*, or, perhaps now the *virtus Augustorum* is visually proclaimed in the east, as the goddess Virtus guides the Severans toward military glory.

After Caracalla was proclaimed Augustus by the Severan forces and nominated *imperator destinatus* by the emperor, Septimius began to mint issues of Virtus coins with the new legends *VIRT AVGG* and *VIRTVTI AVGG* – an abbreviation for *Augustorum*. This is the first time in Roman history that imperial *virtus* no longer belongs solely to the current emperor; it now also belongs to the emperor's designated heir as well.⁴² The Virtus coinage produced during



Figure 207: Denarius of Caracalla featuring Virtus on the reverse. Ca. 198 CE.

Septimius' eleventh imperial acclamation depicts a variation on the victory type which the emperor minted at the beginning of his reign. On the reverse of a denarius, Virtus stands left and holds a victoriola in the palm of her right hand, which offers a laurel wreath to Virtus (**Fig. 207**).⁴³ In her left hand, she wields an upright spear; and a round shield rests by her side. The legend reads *VIRT AVGG*. Caracalla, identified only as *ANTONINVS AVGVSTVS* on the obverse, reused the die, rendering this his earliest production of Virtus coinage.⁴⁴



Figure 208: As featuring the seated Virtus type on the reverse. Severan period.

The *virtus Augustorum* is also celebrated on a series of coins that feature the seated Virtus type. On the reverse of an as, Virtus, identified by the legend *VIRTVS AVGVSTOR*, appropriates the role of Roma (**Fig. 208**).⁴⁵ Virtus, seated on a pile of armor, proffers a victoriola in the palm of her right hand and carries a *parazonium* in her left. She wears a crested

⁴² *Imperator destinatus* coinage: *BMCRE Carac.* 193-6.

⁴³ *BMCRE Sept. Sev.* 141, 211-2, 300-1; *RIC 4 Sept. Sev.* 145A-B; 171A-B, 303, 517.

⁴⁴ *RIC 4 Carac.* 50-1, 354. See also Mattingly 1950, 188.

⁴⁵ *BMCRE Sept. Sev.* 373, 679b, 815-6; *RIC 4 Sept. Sev.* 830A-C. Also minted by Caracalla: *BMCRE Carac.* 522-3, 822b, 822d, 829. Also minted by Geta: *BMCRE Get.* 840d, 842b.

helmet and a long chiton that reveals her right breast. That Virtus has again supplanted Roma in her own iconography demonstrates the significance of *virtus* in maintaining the empire in a defensive position rather than an offensive one. Both Caracalla and Geta reused this die, thus indicating that it is the *virtus Augustorum* that sustains the integrity of Rome's defenses, preserving the peace through the military might of the Severan dynasty.⁴⁶

Septimius also minted a new series of *adventus* coins that commemorates the homecoming of the Severans, indicated by the legend *ADVENT AVGG*. The event must refer to the arrival of Septimius and his son into Rome on the 9th of April, 202 in the year of Septimius' decennialia.⁴⁷ On the reverse of a denarius, Septimius, dressed in a *paludamentum* and carrying a spear, approaches Rome on horseback (Fig. 209).⁴⁸ His guide toward the city is none other than Virtus, who



Figure 209: Denarius of Septimius Severus featuring an *adventus*, led by Virtus. Ca. 203 CE.

pulls the reins of the emperor's horse and carries a *vexillum*. The goddess hails to the people of Rome, during his *adventus*, the emperor's newly acquired *virtus* from Parthia. And her action demonstrates her divine approbation of the emperor's martial courage displayed in battle. The attendance of Virtus in this Severan *adventus* may also allude to the location in which Septimius entered the city, namely through the Porta Capena where the Temple of Honos and Virtus was located – the same gate through which Augustus entered during his *adventus* from Parthia during his mission to retrieve the lost standards in 20 BCE.

Concominantly, Septimius struck another *VIRTVS AVG* type. The reverse of an aureus minted after his eleventh imperial acclamation illustrates a cuirassed Septimius on horseback, subjugating a fallen Parthian adversary with his spear (Fig. 210).⁴⁹ The legend reads *VIRTVS AVG*. The iconography of the coin

⁴⁶ Caracalla: *RIC 4 Sept. Sev.* 176, 466a-b, 468, 477. Geta: *BMCRE Geta* 465b; *RIC 4 Sept. Sev.* 56, 140, 144.

⁴⁷ Birley 1972, 212; Dio 77 (76).1.

⁴⁸ *BMCRE Sept. Sev.* 304-6; *RIC 4 Sept. Sev.* 248.

⁴⁹ *BMCRE Sept. Sev.* 142-3; *RIC 4 Sept. Sev.* 146A-B.



Figure 210: Aureus of Septimius Severus featuring the emperor on horseback defeating an enemy on the reverse. Severan period.

is a reflection of the hunting typology of *Virtus* coinage initiated by Hadrian; however, the theme here is rather military. Septimius had no need to demonstrate his martial prowess in a lion hunt; for, his *virtus* was validated in his subjugation of the Parthians, legitimized by the circumstance that Parthia invaded Roman Nisibis in Mesopotamia. The importance of projecting the emperor's *virtus* in battle is stressed by this aureus, which invites the viewer to imagine the heroic feats of Septimius on the battlefield in Parthia that saved

the Romans from the invading barbarians. Thus, the coin relays to the viewer that Rome is shielded by the *virtus* of the emperor, the *virtus Augusti*. The iconography is not without *pathos*, however. The Parthian man, having fallen onto his shield, quiver tossed aside, and still grasping his bow, reaches out his hand toward the emperor. His image invokes his lack of *virtus*, now extinguished by the *virtus* of the emperor. Nevertheless, the iconography is clear: the *virtus* of barbarians had been expunged by the *virtus* of Septimius, whose *virtus* remains *invicta*.



Figure 211: Denarius of Septimius Severus featuring the emperor on horseback defeating an enemy on the reverse. Severan period.

The invincibility of Septimius' *virtus* was promoted through his coins with a new legend *INVICTA VIRTUS*. The iconography is almost the same as the aureus above: Septimius on horseback dispatches a Parthian enemy below (Fig. 211).⁵⁰ The legend encompassing the scene reads: *INVICTA VIRTUS*, or the "unconquered *virtus*."⁵¹ The iconography and the legend indicate that Septimius demonstrated his *virtus* on the Parthian battlefield and was not conquered in the martial contest in

⁵⁰ *BMCRE Sept. Sev.* 340; *RIC 4 Sept. Sev.* 269.

⁵¹ This epithet appears again in the inscription on the Arch of Gallienus in Rome, rededicated by Gallienus in 262 CE: *GALLIENO CLEMENTISSIMO PRINCIPI, CUIUS INVICTA VIRTUS SOLA PIETATE SUPERATA EST*: "Gallienus, superior in clemency, whose unconquered martial valor (*invicta virtus*) is only surpassed by his piety." See Coarelli 2014, 195-6; Southern 2001, 136.

virtus. Conversely, the Parthian soldier, having fallen into submission, demonstrates that his *virtus* has been conquered by the emperor, whereas his own *virtus* remains integral to the emperor's reputation in martial valor. The iconography not only illuminates the emperor in a limelight of martial glory, but it also provokes the viewer to reflect on the continuity of peace which the emperor has provided by mean of his *invicta virtus* – the emperor's military might that cannot be conquered by Rome's enemies.

Following his father's military successes, Caracalla minted many of the same Virtus coins as his father after he was proclaimed Augustus. Even though he had no military experience during his father's Parthian War (which occurred before he received the *toga virilis* at age 13), his father groomed him to be the next *imperator*, conferring the same titles and honors Septimius had procured for himself, including



Figure 212: Aureus of Caracalla featuring the crowning of the emperor by Virtus on the reverse. Severan period.

the *virtus imperatoris*.⁵² On the reverse of an aureus minted by Caracalla, Virtus, labeled *VIRTVS AVGG*, crowns a young Caracalla with a laurel wreath. He wears cuirass and the emperor's *paludamentum* (**Fig. 212**).⁵³ Caracalla holds a victoriola, which bestows her laurel crown upon him, doubtless alluding to his father's victory in Parthia, shared with his son, the new Augustus. On a denarius, a young Caracalla replaces his father on the Parthian battlefield (**Fig. 213**).⁵⁴ Caracalla tramples a collapsed Parthian soldier wearing a Parthian cap and still holding onto his bow. The legend *INVICTA VIRTVS* advertises the continuity of the Severan dynasty's irrepressible *virtus*.



Figure 213: Denarius of Caracalla on horseback defeating an enemy on the reverse. Severan period.

⁵² *HA Sept. Sev.* 16; Birley 1972, 210.

⁵³ *RIC 4 Carac.* 73.

⁵⁴ *RIC 4 Carac.* 155.



Figure 214: Denarius of Caracalla featuring the emperor and bound prisoners on the reverse. 206-210 CE.

Caracalla circulated several issues of Virtus in *Standmotiv* types, but he also invented three new Virtus types.⁵⁵ On the reverse of a denarius minted between 206-210, Caracalla presents himself as the imperial manifestation of *virtus*, replacing the goddess in her stead (Fig. 214).⁵⁶ Caracalla, wearing a cuirass, tunic, and *paludamentum*, stands in the canonical *Standmotiv* of Virtus. He carries a spear in his right hand and a *parazonium* in his left. His person is flanked by three subjugated figures over which he towers. The figure on the left is a river god, most probably the Tigris, on which Ctesiphon lay. The two bound figures to the left are prisoners of war, likely two of the 100,000 Parthian captives taken into the custody of the Severans. The scene is encompassed by the legend *VIRTVS AVGG*.



Figure 215: Sesterius of Caracalla featuring the emperor, trophy, and bound prisoners on the reverse. 201 CE.

On the reverse of a sesterius struck in 201, Caracalla, again, supplants the role and image of Virtus with himself (Fig. 215).⁵⁷ A youthful, cuirassed Caracalla, standing right, assumes the *Standmotiv*; however, this time, in lieu of a *parazonium*, he extends his right arm and places his hand on the helmet of a trophy. Seated and bound to the trunk of the trophy are two conquered prisoners of war in Parthian caps and long robes. The legend again reads *VIRTVS AVGG*. It has become increasingly common for emperors to appropriate the image of Virtus, conveying the message that they are the embodiment of martial excellence and that *virtus* resides with them.

⁵⁵ Virtus in *Standmotiv* types: *BMCRE Carac.* 679a, 710-1, 811b; *Joint Reign of Septimius Severus, Caracalla, and Geta: 209-211:* 13, 114, 164, 170 (Geta); *Joint Reign of Caracalla and Geta: 7b*; *RIC 4 Carac.* 50-1, 112, 177A-B, 147-8, 149a-b, 187, 191, 198, 304, 456, 466a-b, 468.

⁵⁶ *BMCRE Carac.* 520-1; *RIC 4 Carac.* 96, 175.

⁵⁷ *BMCRE Carac.* 803; *RIC 4 Carac.* 409.



Figure 216: As of Caracalla featuring Virtus, a trophy, and bound prisoner on the reverse. 210 CE.

In 210, Caracalla minted his last Virtus type and Virtus coinage. On the reverse of an as, Virtus is allowed to reclaim her position in scenes of victory and defeat (**Fig. 216**).⁵⁸ Virtus stands to the right and faces left. She is appropriately dressed, wearing a helmet, Amazonian tunic, and boots; however, the tunic divests her left breast rather than her right. She wields a reverse spear in her left hand, a *parazonium* in her right, and rests her right foot on top of a helmet, indicative of the fact that *virtus* has defeated the enemy. To the left stands a trophy – a physical analogue for *virtus*. The trophy is composed of a horned helmet, a round shield, an oblong shield, four spears, and a cuirass with tunic. A fettered captive wearing a Parthian cap and cloak around his chest sits under the towering trophy and is made to gaze upon his arms and armor that once comprised his *virtus*. However, *virtus* now belongs to Caracalla, whose laureate bust is featured on the obverse. Although Caracalla was only around the age of 12 during his father's defeat of the Parthians, these Virtus coins minted by Caracalla suggest that he was, somehow, involved in the sack of Ctesiphon, perhaps as little more than an eye-witness. Curiously, Caracalla did not mint any Virtus coins during his sole reign, likely because he had no victories of his own. In any case, Septimius still allowed his son to reap the honors of his father's *victoria* and *virtus*, licensing him to use not only the image of Virtus, but also to become the personified *virtus*, replacing the goddess (something Septimius never did), even though he possessed no military experience of his own.

The last Virtus coinage minted by Septimius illuminates his shared military exploits with his sons, indicating a passing of the torch of the official *virtus Augusti*, thereby solidifying a familial dynasty in military power in Rome. On the reverse of an aureus, Septimius, Caracalla, and Geta, all in military uniform and *paludamentum*, canter on horseback toward the left with their right arms raised in a gesture of

⁵⁸ *BMCRE Carac.* 209-10; *RIC 4 Carac.* 458a-b.



Figure 217: Aureus of Septimius Severus featuring the three Severans on horseback with the legend VIRTUS AVGVSTORVM on the reverse. Severan period.



Figure 218: Aureus of Septimius Severus featuring the three emperors on horseback with the legend ADVENT AVGG on the reverse. Severan period.

speech, benevolence, or greeting.⁵⁹ The surrounding legend reads *VIRTUS AVGVSTORVM* – the martial excellence of the three Augusti (Fig. 217).⁶⁰ The cavalcade does not invoke a specific event; however, by the fact that it simulates an *adventus*, especially that of the *adventus* coinage of Septimius minted in 195, in which Virtus participates, it can be construed that the iconography exemplifies a triumphal *adventus*, or, perhaps, a “*virtus-adventus*,” described by Brilliant.⁶¹ That the *virtus Augustorum* eventually became conflated with the *adventus Augustorum* is corroborated by a variant of the same coin in which the Severan cavalcade rides to the right and the legend above reads *ADVENT AVGG* (Fig. 218).⁶²

There exists no literary evidence that Septimius ever celebrated a senatorially decreed triumph, a *triumphus iustus*, even though he was awarded two of them; however, the *adventus* coinage, the triumph-themed coins from Nikopolis and Mytilene, Caracalla’s triumph coinage, as well as the “*Virtus Augustorum*” denarius affirm

that Severan arrivals were triumphal. In this way, Septimius Severus could continue to avoid senatorial triumphs with humility and could “triumph” in every city he visited, publicly demonstrating his *virtus* and accruing the benefits from his virtue: the glory, respect, and esteem across the empire – a tactic first exercised by Hadrian in his many *adventus* events. The idea to hold triumphal *adventus* may have stemmed from Septimius’ first *adventus* into the city of Rome in 193, which was described by Dio as one

⁵⁹ Brilliant 1963, 175-6.

⁶⁰ *BMCRE Sept. Sev.* 274; *RIC 4 Sept. Sev.* 305. Also minted by Caracalla: *RIC 4 Sept. Sev.* 177.

⁶¹ Brilliant (1963, 175-6) notes the iconographical commonality between *virtus* coins and *adventus* coins and names this scene as a “*virtus-adventus*.”

⁶² *RIC 4 Sept. Sev.* 177B.

of the greatest spectacles of military festivity.⁶³ Moreover, Septimius would, then, be able to manipulate the narrative of the Parthian Wars to include the participation of his sons and secure the people's approbation of their dynastic succession and authority on account of the *virtus* the Severans display in their triumphal arrivals. The *virtus Augustorum* of the Severan dynasty was not only commemorated on coins, but was also made transparent on the Severan Quadrifrons at Lepcis Magna, where Septimius Severus and his family celebrated a triumphal *adventus* in 202 or 203.

VI.II: The Severan Quadrifrons at Lepcis Magna

Soon after Septimius Severus returned to Rome to celebrate his *decennalia*, he set sail for Africa to continue his triumphal journey across the provinces of the empire. When he arrived in Lepcis Magna, he initiated a building program, which produced a new forum, basilica, possibly a temple dedicated to Bacchus and Hercules, and a monumental tetrapylon arch at the intersection of the city's *cardo* and *decumanus maximus* – the Severan Quadrifrons, dating sometime in the first decade of the 3rd century.⁶⁴ The four piers were decorated with 24 relief panels and the attics on each side of the quadrifrons were decorated with longer sculptural friezes, the figures of which are two-thirds life-size.⁶⁵ The attic sculptures comprise the northwest “triumph” relief, the southeast “triumph” relief, the southwest “*dextrarum iunctio*” relief, and the northeast “sacrifice” relief.⁶⁶ Two of the friezes – the southeast triumph relief and the *dextrarum iunctio* relief – exhibit the goddess Virtus in two disparate roles, one performative and the other as an observer, the latter of which is not unprecedented for Virtus in Roman art, since she had participated in triumphal sacrifices as witness. Moreover, Virtus appears again in two extant reliefs of the original 24 panels that ornamented the pylons of the monument, thereby rendering the image of Virtus at least four times. The visual program of the monument is one of war, victory, and triumph, attested by

⁶³ Dio 75 (74).1.

⁶⁴ Birley 1972, 218. If the Severans arrived as early as 202, then the arch should be dated to within a few years of his arrival, allowing enough time for such a tremendous undertaking to be completed by a provincial city in Africa, especially including four monumental friezes and 24 figural relief panels decorating the interior.

⁶⁵ Bianchi Bandinelli, Vergara Caffarelli, and Caputo 1966, 39.

⁶⁶ Nomenclature adopted from Strocka 1972.

not only the figural panel reliefs that depict Parthian battles, a siege of a walled city, and Parthian captives, but also by the exterior of the monument, which is decorated with *Victoriae* and *tropaea*.⁶⁷ Therefore, it should come as no surprise that the *virtus Augustorum* of the Severan dynasty be visually emphasized.



Figure 219: The Severan Quadrifrons: Northwest panel featuring a triumphal adventus procession. Severan period.

The so-called “triumph” relief of the northwest side is devoid of any divine characteristics, save the reliefs decorating the car that depict a flying Victoria with palm frond and Tyche-Fortuna as the personification of Lepcis Magna, crowned by Hercules and Liber Pater/Bacchus – the patron deities of the city (Fig. 219).⁶⁸ Therefore, I will not be discussing it at length. However, the context of the scene is important for the role which Virtus plays in the southeast “triumph” relief. The appearance of the lighthouse in the background of the frieze informs the viewer of the location of the procession: not Rome via Ostia, not Alexandria, but Lepcis Magna, the harbor of which was constructed during the Severan period.⁶⁹ Moreover, the secularity of the scene suggests that an event of this caliber did, historically, transpire, in which Septimius and his sons Caracalla and Geta enter Lepcis Magna. In his influential article on the iconography of the reliefs, Strocka posits that these friezes do not pre-suppose actual events as witnessed by the people of Lepcis Magna. He furthermore proposes that, appropos of this relief in particular, it is neither a triumph nor an *adventus*, but rather an allegorical celebration of *gloria* or *virtus Augustorum* set within the framework of a triumphal display because the emperor’s appearance in the

⁶⁷ For a discussion of the Parthian battles and a comparison with the Severan Arch in Rome, as well as an emphasis of *virtus* on the monument, cf. La Rocca 1985.

⁶⁸ Ryberg 1955, 160. Kleiner (1992, 342) mistakenly calls them Cybele, Hercules, and Venus.

⁶⁹ Ostia: Bianchi Bandinelli, Vergara Caffarelli, and Caputo 1966, 47. On this matter, see also Townsend 1938, 514; Strocka 1972, 166; Hannestad 1986, 274; Milhous 1992, 324; Mittag 2009, 458; Faust 2011, 130. For the development of the harbor during the Severan period, cf. Ward-Perkins 1948, 61.

city requires a triumphal attendance.⁷⁰ I do agree with Strocka that the triumphal iconography of the relief – the Severans parading in quadriga, decorated with triumphal motifs, through Lepcis Magna – cannot imply a *triumphus iustus*, on the grounds that these were held in Rome and that they must be decreed by the senate and officially accepted by the emperor, who readily rejected both triumphs offered to him. However, that the iconography cannot connote an *adventus* on the grounds that there are no civilians of Lepcis Magna to greet the emperor as there are in Hadrianic *adventus* scenes is unreasonable.⁷¹ As I have demonstrated above, an imperial *adventus* is not formulaic and the iconography is characterized in different ways. And a salutation by a city divinity or official is not necessary for any *adventus*. For Hadrian, the *adventus* was ceremonial. For Domitian, it was a public spectacle on foot. For Trajan and the Antonines, it was militaristic and on horseback. And, for Septimius, it was certainly triumphal, attested by the iconography of the coins minted under his principate. Therefore, I agree with Mittag and Faust who both believe that the northwest “triumph” relief does not depict a triumph, but rather an *adventus*.⁷² Although the frieze may not portray the arrival of the Severans to Lepcis Magna in 202 or 203 as it actually took place, Strocka is correct in stating that the emperor reveals himself as always and everywhere victorious.⁷³ That the emperor and his family entered Lepcis Magna in a triumphal manner is suggested by the iconography of his *adventus* coinage above. Moreover, since the southeast “triumph” relief is the



Figure 220: Severan Quadrifrons: Southeast frieze featuring a “virtus-adventus. Severan period.

⁷⁰ Strocka 1972, 166-7.

⁷¹ Strocka 1972, 166-7 (followed by Hannestad 1986, 274; and Milhous 1992, 324). Bianchi Bandinelli, Vergara Caffarelli, and Caputo (1966, 47) describe the scene as a “solemn *reditus*.” However, a *reditus* implies a return to Rome after the conclusion of a war, not a scheduled arrival home, or homecoming as is here the case. An *adventus* can take place in any city, attested by the *adventus* coinage of Hadrian.

⁷² Mittag 2009, 458; Faust 2011, 130.

⁷³ Strocka 1972, 167.

material pendant of the northwest frieze, it, too, illustrates the emperor's *adventus*; however, the appearance of the gods, including the prominent position of Virtus, renders the scene a conceptually Severan "*virtus-adventus*."

Although the southeast frieze is heavily damaged and entire slabs are lost, the composition of the frieze is comparable to that of the northwest frieze (**Fig. 220**). A triumphal procession is clear from the surviving iconography, rendering this a pendant triumphal *adventus*; this time, however, attended by the gods.⁷⁴ The end of the train is clearest. A cavalcade of men in civil attire who carry *vexilla* close the procession. They are likely the emperor's cavalymen, who enter a civic space unarmed. The large lacuna in the middle of the frieze obscures our understanding of the central action. However, enough detail remains on the slab located to the right of the central lacuna to deduce that the visual focus of the scene was, once again, a triumphal chariot carrying Septimius and, likely, his sons, just like on the northwest



Figure 221: Severan Quadrifrons: detail of the southeast frieze depicting Julia Domna, Hercules, Virtus, and attendant. Severan period.

frieze. The original presence of the emperor is suggested by the attendance of his wife Julia Domna, whose iconic portrait is displayed above the horses that pull the car in which the emperor rode (**Fig. 221**). Her position precludes her from riding in the car with her husband; rather, she appears as a spectator, holding a palm frond in her left hand and gazing back toward the emperor. The quadriga is preceded by a youth (?) wearing a tunic. His identity cannot be verified due to the obliteration of his face; however, he may have been another *camillus*-type figure without a *bulla* just like the one

⁷⁴ Faust (2011, 130; cf. also Abb. 2 on pg. 136) postulates that Lepcis Magna on one side of the arch corresponds to Rome on the other side, thus, arguing that this *adventus* takes place in Rome.



Figure 222: Severan Quadriumphal Reliefs: detail of the southeast frieze depicting Victoria with trophy at the far right. Severan period.

who leads the quadriga on the northwest relief.⁷⁵ The secularity of the southeast relief comes to an end with the addition of [at least] three divinities included in the procession. Behind Julia Domna is a stray pair of wings that must belong to Victoria. Her presence not only indicates that the scene is myth-historical, but also that this presentation of the emperor's procession is decidedly a celebration of victory.

A victory celebration is corroborated by a second Victoria depicted on the furthest slab to the right (**Fig. 222**). She carries

a large trophy in her right hand. Next to her are a Roman soldier and fettered prisoners seated on a *ferculum* and tied to a second trophy.⁷⁶ To the right of Julia Domna stands Hercules in profile, identified by his muscular physique, his bearded face, his lion skin that drapes over his left shoulder and arm, and his club which he carries in his left hand. And to the right of Hercules stands Virtus.

Virtus is identified by her crested helmet and her tunic that exposes her right breast (**Fig. 221**). No other attribute is visible. She turns her head back to gaze at the emperor in the chariot, perhaps accompanied by Caracalla and Geta, thereby establishing a direct line of sight between the Augusti and the goddess who symbolizes the *virtus Augustorum*. Her lowered right arm seems to grab onto an unidentified object. Strocka opines that it could be a helmet; however, that would be uncharacteristic of Virtus.⁷⁷ Milhous, on the other hand, has determined that her arm's position indicates that the goddess helps lead the quadriga.⁷⁸ Thus, she could have once gripped the reins of the horses. In any case, the sculptors of the frieze were cognizant of Virtus' performative role in triumph and *adventus* scenes. They

⁷⁵ Hannestad 1986, 274.

⁷⁶ Strocka 1972, 156.

⁷⁷ Strocka 1972, 155.

⁷⁸ Milhous 1992, 326.

perhaps possessed a visual template of triumph scenes from Rome, such as from the Arch of Titus, or, more likely, they were influenced by the circulation of Severan coins that depict Virtus, Virtus with trophy and prisoner, *adventus* scenes in which Virtus pulls the reins of the emperor's horse, and *adventus* scenes depicting Septimius, Caracalla, and Geta together on horseback with the legend "*virtus Augustorum*." Moreover, that Virtus leads the emperor in a quadriga, in conjunction with the despondent barbarians bound to a trophy on a *ferculum*, is reminiscent of the coins minted in Nikopolis and Mytilene that depict a triumphal *adventus*. In any case, the artists of the frieze were conscious of the importance of Virtus to Septimius. Here, she symbolizes the *virtus Augusti* (or *Augustorum*) that he acquired during his Parthian campaigns and, especially, during the sack of Ctesiphon, in which the emperor extinguished the *virtus* of the Parthians and captured as many as 100,000 as prisoners of war – his greatest military achievement. Her presence in this triumphal *adventus* scene invites the viewer to reflect on their emperor's military leadership, which intervenes when the integrity of the empire is threatened by a barbarian nation. Her image provides comfort for the Lepcians in knowing that the *virtus Augusti* of the emperor keeps them safe and the state secure. And her performative role as herald of the emperor in both triumphs and triumphal *adventus* (if they are still distinct at this point), visually expresses the emperor's journey to fame and glory, eternalized by the goddess who leads those she chooses to their divinization. And perhaps Septimius' triumphal *adventus* scenes reflect the transition from fame and glory in the mortal world, represented by the mortal *adventus* northwest relief, to eternal fame and glory in the divine world,



Figure 223: Severan Quadrifrons: southwest relief depicting the Concordia Augustorum. Severan period.

epitomized by the immortal *adventus* southeast relief set high atop the attic and projected into the sky as if it were his apotheosis.

Virtus appears again on the southwest relief that illustrates the *Concordia Augustorum* of Septimius and his sons Caracalla and Geta (**Fig. 223**). Septimius Severus carries a *lituus* in his left hand and embraces Caracalla with his right hand in a *dextrarum iunctio*, while Geta stands between them and Julia Domna participates as a spectator.⁷⁹ The rest of the scene is replete with togate officials or senators, citizens, soldiers in armor, a horse, and a pantheon of gods that provide divine witness to the ceremony in which Septimius publicly celebrates the unity of his dynasty with his successors. The Tyche-Fortuna of Lepcis Magna stands in the background of the central scene and should be considered a location device for this event: Lepcis Magna. The other gods that surround the imperial family and give the family their divine endorsement are Hercules and Liber Pater, who flank Tyche-Fortuna, and Minerva, with shield and aegis, located above Julia Domna. Closing the divine circle around the Severans are Mars at the right, who



wears a cuirass, a *paludamentum*, and carries a *parazonium* in the crook of his left arm and Virtus at the left (**Fig. 224**).⁸⁰

Virtus stands behind Julia Domna. She wears a

Figure 224: Severan Quadrifrons: southwest relief detail of the *Concordia Augustorum*, attended by Virtus (left). Severan period.

⁷⁹ For the meaning of the *dextrarum iunctio* in this context, cf. Townsend 1938, 518-9; and Brilliant 1963, 201-2.

⁸⁰ Bartoccini (1931, 125-6) (followed by Townsend 1938, 518; Ryberg 1955, 161; and Milhous 1992, 325) suggests that the male figure to the left of Virtus is Honos. However, he carries no attributes of Honos and he wears a full tunic, whereas the Honos of the 1st century is semi-nude and the Honos of Antoninus Pius wears a toga. Strocka (1972, 158) is likely correct in identifying the man as a centurion or parade marshall. Newby (2007, 209) mistakenly labels Virtus as “Roma,” who never carries the military *vexillum*. The identity of the male figure standing to the right of Septimius Severus must be Mars whose exact image of him wearing a cuirass, a *paludamentum*, and carrying a *parazonium* in the crook of his left arm is on one of the interior panels, along with the imperial family in the guise of the Capitoline triad. For the relief, cf. Faust 2011, 123-5 and 141, Abb. 7. For the identification of Mars on the interior relief panel, cf. Bartoccini 1931, 87-8; La Rocca 1985, 5; Faust 2011, 125.

triple-crested Attic helmet and a double-belted Amazonian tunic that exposes her right breast. In the crook of her left arm, she cradles a *parazonium*, and in her right hand, she brandishes a *vexillum*, symbolizing her military character. That Virtus observes an event is not unprecedented. On the Boscoreale Cups, she witnessed Augustus' acceptance of victory, alongside Honos, Venus with Cupid and a *victoriola*, Mars, and the personifications of the conquered provinces. On three Trajanic reliefs, she participated in a triumphal sacrifice, along with various goddesses, including her Trajanic partners Felicitas, Fortuna, and Victoria. On the Arcus Novus Relief, she bore witness to a victory event, attended by the emperor, Venus, Cupid, and the personifications of the subjugated provinces. And here on the southwest relief of the Quadrifrons, Virtus attends the concord of the Severan dynasty in which the authority and virtues of the emperor are consigned to Caracalla, including the *virtus Augusti*. Moreover, the scene is not un-militaristic. Virtus provides the pendant for Mars on the other side of the family, thereby implying a conceptual link between the god of war and the goddess of military excellence. Mars stands on the flank with the army, which is logical, whereas Virtus stands on the side of the citizens. Although this may seem, at first, irrational, the presence of Virtus on the side of the senators and civilians visually endorses her role as the divine guardian of the safety and security of the citizen-body, through the *virtus Augusti*, or here, rather, the *virtus Augustorum*, of the Severan dynasty.⁸¹ Her image provides the Lepcian viewer a visual assurance of the emperor's continued protection of the empire from external threats to the martial supremacy of the Severan empire.

As for the interior pylon reliefs, Virtus appears again in a sacrificial scene (**Fig. 225**). Septimius and the Severan family, *capite velato*, stand on the steps of a temple comprised of only several remaining fluted columns. Below the steps, in a separate register, is an ensuing sacrifice of a sheep and a cow at an

⁸¹ Hannestad (1986, 276) argues that the placement of Virtus among the senators underscores the "change which also the coins bear witness to, namely a militarization of the previously civil imperial virtues [*virtus* and *concordia*]." However, the image of Virtus was never non-military at any point in Roman history. The visual image of the goddess only represents military virtue, even on coins. Therefore, this is not the case.



Figure 225: Severan Quadriportal: interior pylon relief depicting a triumphal sacrifice attended by Virtus (left). Severan period.

altar, which the Severan family above observes. The Severans are once again surrounded by divinities. Hercules, *capite velato* in his lion skin, stands between Septimius Severus and likely Caracalla. Townsend has also identified Liber Pater, albeit heavily damaged, to the left of the imperial family as pendant to

Hercules. Thus, their dual presence lends credence to a Lepcis Magna locale.⁸² To the right, a bearded god in a tunic and mantle and standing on a pedestal, making him a statue, is turned toward the imperial family.⁸³ He carries a pine branch in his left hand and wears an oak wreath around his head. Bartoccini believes that he could be Silvanus.⁸⁴ To the very left of the scene is Virtus. Bartoccini posits that she is also a statue; however, she does not stand on a pedestal, but has her feet on the ground; and, moreover, she appears to be visually engaged in the emperor's performance during the sacrifice.⁸⁵ She wears her typical costume: a crested helmet, an Amazonian tunic that exposes her right breast, and pelt boots. There is also a balteus slung around her right shoulder. She once held a long attribute in her left hand that rested against her right shoulder; however, due to the breakage, it is unclear what exactly the attribute was. Peeking out behind her left shoulder is a round shield, likely held by her balteus. Faust duly notes that the Amazon goddess cannot be Roma because her presence would wrongly suggest that the sacrifice takes

⁸² Townsend 1938, 522.

⁸³ Faust 2011, 116.

⁸⁴ Bartoccini 1931, 74-6. Cf. also Townsend 1938, 522; Ryberg 1955, 135; Faust 2011, 116.

⁸⁵ Bartoccini 1931, 76. Cf. also Townsend 1938, 522; Milhous 1992, 327; Faust 2011, 116. *Contra* Ryberg (1955, 135) and La Rocca (1985, 5), and Newby (2007, 209), who label her "Roma."

place in Rome; however, the setting is already shown to be Lepcis Magna by the presence of the city's patron gods Hercules and Liber Pater.⁸⁶ The conceptual theme of the sacrifice is expressly the *pietas* of the Severan family, which must have performed a sacrifice at one of the temples in Lepcis Magna, perhaps at the Temple of the Gens Septimia and Concordia – a massive octastyle temple in the Severan Forum.⁸⁷ However, the appearance of Virtus also renders the theme of the sacrifice inherently martial. Her Severan role as the *Virtus Augustorum* indicates that the military might of the Severan dynasty was also celebrated at the sacrifice. Therefore, the sacrifice can also be construed as a thank-offering to the gods who sanctioned the emperor's authority through his martial superiority – his hometown deities, as well as one



Figure 226: Severan Quadrifrons: detail of an exterior pylon relief with Virtus in the upper-right-hand corner. Severan period.

which he brought back from the Parthian War to join the rest of his divine entourage: Virtus.

Virtus is visualized in a final relief divided into two panels of three registers that depicts an assortment of extant gods among Caracalla and Geta, including two *Victoriae*, Jupiter, Juno, Apollo, Diana, Silvanus, Ceres, Cybele, Liber Pater, Hercules, Mercury, Honos, and Virtus.⁸⁸ Virtus wears an Attic helmet with only a part of the crest remaining in the back and pelt boots (**Fig. 226**). Her Amazonian tunic that divests her right breast is double-belted, the upper band of which is secured by a very large, exposed girdle. She also wears a very long mantle

⁸⁶ Faust 2011, 116, no. 25.

⁸⁷ For the Temple of the Gens Septimia and Concordia, see Brouquier-Reddé, V. 1992. *Temples et Cultes de Tripolitaine*. Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (*Études d'antiquités africaines*), Paris, pp. 95-100; cf. also Cordovana 2012, 58-9.

⁸⁸ Bartoccini 1931, 87-8; La Rocca 1985, 3-5; Faust 2011, 126-9.

that drapes over her left shoulder, is secured under her girdles, and continues over her left arm and down her side. Unfortunately, her arms are missing; however, there is a break above her left shoulder which is suggestive of a longer attribute held in her left hand, perhaps a spear or *vexillum*. Her identity is supported by the semi-nude youth below her, probably Honos, whose mantle covers his left shoulder and drapes down his side.⁸⁹ The two panels appear to celebrate the crowning of Caracalla and Geta by two *Victoriae* as heirs to the Severan dynasty, attended by a panoply of deities, who consent to this transition of authority. And the appearance of *Virtus* seems to reaffirm the brothers' inherited authority through the display of their *virtus Augustorum*, without which the martial continuity of an empire defended by Septimius would be undermined.

In order to successfully convey the seamless transition of military power and political authority from Septimius to his two sons, Caracalla and Geta, the image of *Virtus* was necessary. Her image not only guaranteed that the goddess and her gift would remain with the Severan family even after the death of Septimius, but also the perpetuity of her protection, enacted through the military enterprises of the Severan boys during their future principates. *Virtus* maintains her role as the agent of martial values. She is the herald of the *virtus Augustorum* of a continuing dynasty, whose agency effectively communicates to the Lepcian people the legitimization of the Severan boys' martial capacity and, therefore, the promise of security and peace during their principates. *Virtus*, furthermore, retains her performative role as the herald of Septimius, whom she leads through victory celebrations on earth in the form of triumphal arrivals into provincial cities, where the Severans can accrue the martial renown every emperor desired to possess.

⁸⁹ La Rocca 1985, 4; Faust 2011, 127.

VI.III: The Coronation of Septimius Severus from the Theater Reliefs at Hierapolis



Figure 227: The Coronation of Septimius Severus from the Theater of Hierapolis. Severan period.

The Quadrifrons at Lepcis Magna was not the only provincial monument to celebrate the *virtus* of Septimius Severus in relief sculpture. The reliefs that decorate the architrave of the main stage door of the *scaenae frons* at the theater in Hierapolis showcase the Severan family amidst the presence of the gods and personifications, including the Amazon goddess who represents *virtus*. The monumental and elaborately decorated *scaenae frons* was constructed during Septimius' reign and dedicated in 206-8 CE, the iconography of which visually announces Hierapolis' religious and political identity.⁹⁰ Thus, the central scene illustrates the city's Pythian Games, celebrated in honor of their divine patron Apollo to the left, in conjunction with a synoptic celebration of the Severan dynasty to the right.⁹¹ A togate Septimius is seated on a throne just to the right of center of the composition (**Fig. 227**). Nike descends on his person from above with arms spread out over the emperor's head. Her hands are lost; however, the extension of her arms suggests that she was carrying a garland or festoon, similar to the way in which Victoria on the Aurelian Adventus Relief Panel carries a festoon above Marcus Aurelius' head during his *adventus*, hence the coined term "Coronation of Septimius Severus." Septimius is flanked by his togate sons Caracalla on

⁹⁰ Ritti 1985, 9-10; D'Andria 2001, 108; Newby 2007, 213.

⁹¹ Ritti 1985, 59-77; Newby 2007, 213-5; Chuvin 1987, 100-2.

the left and Geta on the right, the likeness of which was subject to *damnatio memoriae*. The inscription on the cornice above Geta's head reads: *[K]AΙΣΑΡΕΣ*, "the Caesars," referring to Caracalla and Geta.⁹² To the right of Geta stands Julia Domna, *capite velato*, and labeled *[I]ΟΥΛΙΑ*, "Julia" on the cornice.⁹³ She holds a *patera* in her right hand, indicating that the scene is not only religious and political, but also ceremonial. The *pietas* of the Severan dynasty is invoked by Julia Domna's allusion to sacrifice. Next to Julia Domna is the Tyche of Hierapolis, labeled *ΤΥΧΗ*, who holds a cornucopia. In the right corner of the relief is Roma, seated. Her head has been effaced; however, it does appear that she did, once, wear a helmet. She wears a long, belted chiton, bunched on her lap, that does not expose her right breast, a mantle over her chest and shoulders, and a pair of pelt boots. A balteus is slung over her right shoulder and carries a *parazonium* secured at her left hip. She holds a spear, unusually positioned between her legs, with her right hand. Her left hand rests on a round shield, decorated with a sphinx device, set at her side. Her presence next to the Tyche of Hierapolis, whose leg overlaps that of Roma, conveys a message of *concordia* between the two cities. Moreover, the presence of both Nike and Roma suggests that the program of the central scene is a narrative that tells the story of the city's religious heritage and political allegiance both to Septimius and to the state, here manifested in the image of Roma. As for comparanda in the Roman east, her image can be contrasted with the seated Roma from the Monument of Zoilos at Aphrodisias, which may have served as the archetypal model of the seated Roma type in Asia Minor.

The continuous visual program of the reliefs turns a 90-degree angle behind Roma (**Fig. 228**). She is succeeded by an Amazon goddess, who turns her attention toward Roma and even gestures toward Roma with her right hand. The Amazon goddess is positioned in a *Standmotiv* and wears an Attic helmet with crest, albeit mostly broken. She wears a short, double-belted Amazonian tunic, knotted at the sternum, that does not expose her right breast, likely to distinguish her from a representation of an

⁹² Ritti 1985, 62-3.

⁹³ Ritti 1985, 63.



Figure 228: Coronation of Septimius Severus from the Theater of Hierapolis. Severan Period.

Amazon, whose image could be visually misconstrued as barbaric in the Greek east. She also wears a mantle that hangs over her left shoulder and runs down her back, as well as a pair of pelt boots. A balteus runs across her chest from her right shoulder and carries a *parazonium* at her left hip. She also wields a spear in her left hand. The inscription on the cornice above the goddess identifies her as Andreia (*ΑΝΔΡΕΙΑ*). That Andreia is the Greek equivalent of Virtus is transparent, not only from her iconography, but also from her ideological importance in the Severan dynastic visual program.

The only other extant image of Andreia comes from the Monument of Zoilos at Aphrodisias, on which Andreia stands, coincidentally also behind a seated Roma on a 90-degree turn. Andreia is coupled with the Greek equivalent of the male Honos, the female Timē. Together they flank Zoilos, who appropriated the Roman conceptualization of *honor* and *virtus* for his Greek monument. However, knowing that there never existed an image of Andreia in the Greek world, Zoilos created one using some elements of Virtus (i.e. her shield and helmet), but substituted the Amazon type for a matron type, most likely because an Amazon, reputed as a mythological adversary of the Greeks, could send an unintended message in the Greek east. No other image of Andreia survives until the creation of the theater reliefs at Hierapolis, which celebrate the Severan dynasty, in which Andreia is directly modeled on the image of Virtus. This may also be the first time in history that the Greeks adopted a Roman model for a goddess of

their own. The Hierapoleans considered Andreia to be the Greek equivalent of Virtus, attested by the annexation of the Roman iconography of Virtus.

In 1985, Ritti stated that Andreia corresponded to Fortitudo; and, in 2011, she described Andreia as “*Virtus-Fortitudo*.”⁹⁴ However, Fortitudo has no image in the Roman world. And *Virtus-Fortitudo* is not a Roman concept; however, I would argue that *fortitudo* is indeed one characteristic of many that constitutes *virtus militaris*. In 1987, Chuvin correctly stated that Andreia undoubtedly represented *virtus*; however, he attributes *virtus* to “the Romans” in general, which is incorrect.⁹⁵ The image of Andreia, in the guise of Virtus and standing next to Roma in the Coronation of Septimius Severus, represents, first and foremost, the *virtus* of the emperor, his *virtus Augusti*. More specifically, Andreia represents the *virtus Augustorum*, personified as the goddess who accompanies the Severans on their travels of triumph through the provinces. Her turn and gesture toward the Severans (and away from the other figures of the shared block) visualizes this connection between the Severans and their *virtus Augustorum*.⁹⁶ The visual grouping of Roma and Virtus is not unprecedented; for they are seen together on several monuments that celebrate victory including the Monument of Zoilos, the Northeast Panel of the Ara Pacis, the Medinaceli Reliefs, the Jupiter Column at Mainz, the Cancelleria Reliefs, and the Severan Quadrifons.

The Greek sculptors of the theater frieze may not have known with precision the meaning of Virtus in the visual rhetoric of Septimius; however, they understood that she was an important contribution to Severan propaganda, which necessitated her inclusion in this scene commemorating the Severan dynasty. Andreia/Virtus shares a prominent position in the programmatic frieze that exalts the Severan family and

⁹⁴ Ritti 1985, 68; 2011, 177.

⁹⁵ Chuvin 1987, 103.

⁹⁶ The other three figures on the same side of the continuous frieze with Andreia are Σύνοδος (*Synodos*; *Guild*, here, of Dionysus), Δολιχός (*Dolichos*; *Long Course*, i.e. running track), and Δάδουχος (*Dadouchos*; *Torch-Bearer*): Ritti 1985, 69. There appears to be no obvious program between the four figures on this block, therefore, Andreia, in the guise of Roman Virtus belongs to the Roman imperial family. This is corroborated by the fact that Andreia is turned to the left, away from Synodos, and gestures toward Roma, whereas Synodos is turned to the right, away from Andreia, thereby creating a visual division between these two figural groupings. The synoptic Severan group among the figures relating to the Pythian Games is bracketed by Caracalla on the left and Andreia on the right.

their imperial virtues. Moreover, it is significant that the sculptors chose to translate *virtus* as *andreia*. They clearly understood the inherent martial quality of *virtus* and its importance to the Roman emperors through the image of Virtus, but labeled the Amazon goddess Andreia for Hierapolis' Greek audience. The Roman image of martial Virtus syncretized with the visual conceptualization of Andreia in the Greek east on the theater at Hierapolis establishes a clear definition of *virtus* in Greek: *andreia*, whose characteristics supersede just a quality of "manliness" to connote a more Roman meaning as "martial excellence." It is this martial excellence that is embodied in the Coronation of Septimius Severus as Virtus named Andreia, whose image promised peace to the Romans of Asia Minor, protected by the martial *andreia* of the Severan *fundatores pacis*.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ *FVNDATOR PACIS* coins minted by Septimius Severus and Caracalla: *BMCRE Sept. Sev.* 189-91, 330-2; *RIC 4 Sept. Sev.* 128-9, 160, 265, 293; *RIC 4 Carac.* 129, 154A, 318A. Cf. also Manders 2012, 249.

Chapter VII: The Soldier-Emperors and the End of the Goddess Virtus

VII.I: The Omnipresence of *Virtus* in the 3rd Century CE

Visual representations of *virtus* prevailed in the coinage of 3rd century and early-4th century emperors, numbering in the thousands, minted by the soldier-emperors whose military capacity preserved their political power in Rome. These soldier-emperors of the 3rd and 4th centuries desired to legitimize their *virtus* through the dissemination of Virtus coin types that promote the emperors' martial image. Because the Virtus coin types of the 3rd and 4th centuries are incalculable, I will highlight only those that depict the goddess Virtus, whose likeness fades over the century until her image is completely replaced by masculine figures, namely Mars, Hercules, a soldier, or the emperor himself. Virtus also appears on one provincial relief from Britain and in two state-commissioned sculptural programs: on the Arch of Galerius in Thessaloniki and on the Arch of Constantine in Rome.

Severus Alexander, the last emperor of the Severan dynasty, was only 14 years old upon his ascension to the throne in 222. Having had no military experience, the young emperor began his principate by minting coins that displayed more domestic Virtues rather than martial ones, including



Figure 229: Sandstone relief from Cilurnum at Hadrian's Wall that represents Virtus holding a vexillum. 221/2 CE. Chesters Fort Museum.

Liberalitas, Libertas, Salus, Pax, Providentia, Securitas, Moneta, and Aequitas.¹ It was not until 225 that Severus Alexander began to mint military Virtues, including Fides Militum, Iovi Ultori, Victoria, and Virtus, of whom he minted multiple iconographical variations.² However, in 221/2, his *virtus*

¹ Mattingly 1962, 115-36.

² Mattingly 1962, 60-1, 136-41.

was nominally recognized alongside that of his predecessor on a provincial relief and inscription from Britain featuring Virtus (**Fig. 229**).³ This relief comes from Cilurnum at Hadrian's Wall and depicts Virtus; however, only part of her head and crested helmet survive. She holds a *vexillum*, which reads *VIRTUS AVG[G]*: "the virtus of the Emperors." The two emperors to which the inscription refers are Elagabalus and Severus Alexander, the former having been erased after his assassination by the praetorian guard in 222. However, being only 14 years old, Severus Alexander had not yet earned his *virtus* on the battlefield; and it was not until 225 that the emperor began to produce images of Virtus for himself.



Figure 230: Aureus of Severus Alexander featuring Virtus on the reverse. 225 CE.



Figure 231: Aureus of Severus Alexander featuring Virtus on the reverse. 228 CE.

On the reverse of several issues of aurei, denarii, and quinarii minted by Severus Alexander in 225, Virtus, labeled *VIRTUS AVG*, assumes her canonical *Standmotiv* position and stands to the right (**Fig. 230**).⁴ She wears a double-belted tunic that exposes her right breast, a crested helmet, and boots. She carries a reverse spear in her right hand and rests her left hand on a round shield. It is not clear why Severus Alexander began to mint Virtus coins; however, the fact that the emperor minted contemporary coins depicting Mars, Fides Militum, and Victoria signals that some sort of military expedition was undertaken by him in 225 with purported success.⁵ In 228, the emperor began to mint several more series of Virtus coins. The reverse of a denarius depicts a similar Virtus to the one above; however, she faces left, and carries an upright spear and shield in her left hand and, in her right, a victoriola

³ RIB 1466. Now in the Chesters Fort Museum. The second "G" has been erased. The partial inscription above Virtus reads: *[S]ALVIS AVG[G] ...[F]ELIX ALA II ASTVR[NVM] [ANTONINIANA]*: "...with the emperor(s) safe, fortunate is the second squadron of the Asturians [Antoniniana] (erasure)."

⁴ *BMCRE Sev. Alex.* 267, 277-86, 1089; *RIC 4 Sev. Alex.* 89-90, 181, 182a, 182c, 183. Minted again in 231: *BMCRE Sev. Alex.* 754, 779-8.

⁵ Mattingly 1962, 61. The *Historia Augusta* mentions that Severus Alexander undertook military campaigns before the more well-known Persian Wars in 231; however, it is devoid of any details, cf. *Sev. Alex.* 47, for example.



Figure 232: Denarius of Severus Alexander featuring a seated Virtus on the reverse. 230 CE.



Figure 233: Bronze medallion of Severus Alexander featuring the emperor in a triumphal procession, led by Mars and Virtus. 229 CE.



Figure 234: Bronze medallion of Philip II featuring the emperor in a triumphal procession, led by Mars and Virtus.

which proffers a laurel crown toward Virtus (**Fig. 231**).⁶ Another denarius of the year 230 represents Virtus as a seated goddess, having borrowed the iconographical role of Roma (**Fig. 232**).⁷ Virtus, identified by the legend *VIRTVS AVG*, sits on a pile of armor. She wears a helmet with a long crest, a single-belted tunic that bares her right breast, and pelt boots. A balteus hangs from her right shoulder and she carries a *parazonium* at her side. In her left hand, she brandishes a reverse spear and, in her right, a branch.

In 229, the year of his 3rd consulship, Severus Alexander minted a special issue of bronze medallions that feature the emperor's martial triad: Victoria, Virtus, and Mars (**Fig. 233**).⁸ On the reverse, Severus Alexander rides in triumphal chariot along with Victoria, who crowns him with a laurel wreath. Virtus, on the left, reprises her role as herald of the emperor in

victory scenes. Dressed in a crested helmet and an Amazonian tunic and carrying a spear in her right hand, Virtus marches forward, leading the quadriga. She is balanced by a helmeted and cuirassed Mars with shield and spear on the right. The emperor's military contingent of Mars, Victoria, and Virtus comprises a visual motif of war, victory, and valor.

This martial triad indicates that Severus Alexander campaigned in warfare at some point during the late 220s, during which time he claimed a victory by his *virtus Augusti* and either triumphed or held a

⁶ *BMCRE Sev. Alex.* 709-11; *RIC 4 Sev. Alex.* 220a-b, 259A. Minted again in 233: *BMCRE Sev. Alex.* 983.

⁷ *BMCRE Sev. Alex.* 653-7; *RIC 4 Sev. Alex.* 221a-b. Roma under Severus Alexander is only represented as a seated deity similar to the iconography of this coin; however, she wears a heavily draped chiton that does not expose her breast and drapes to the floor, cf. e.g. *RIC 4 Sev. Alex.* 175, 270, 271c-d, 272, 306, 602, 603f-g, 604-7, 667.

⁸ *BMCRE Sev. Alex.* 588-90; *RIC 4 Sev. Alex.* 499; Gneecchi 1912, 81, no. 18 and Tav. 99, no. 7; Toynbee 1986, 85. Toynbee (1986, 86) also suggests that Virtus appears again on a medallion minted by Maximinus (Gneecchi 1912, 86, no. 3 and Tav. 102, no. 8), who is present in a scene with the emperor, a victoriola, and soldiers. However, there is not enough detail in the figures to discern a female Amazon.

triumphal *adventus* in Rome. The issue was also adapted by Philip the Arab and his son Philip II for two extant medallions, one with the legend *VICTORIAE AVGVSTORVM*, and the other which survives in a much better condition (**Fig. 234**).⁹

In 230, Severus Alexander minted a special issue featuring Virtus and Victoria in commemoration of his *decennalia* set for 231/2, which, as Mattingly has suggested, was celebrated a year in advance because it was known that the emperor was going to set out on campaign toward the east by 231.¹⁰ On the reverse of a series of aes and medallions, Severus Alexander is seated in a *curule* chair. In his left hand, he wields a scepter and, in his right, he proffers a victoriola holding a laurel wreath (**Fig. 235**).¹¹ Behind the emperor stands a semi-nude Victoria. She crowns the emperor with a laurel wreath. To the left of the emperor stands Virtus in a conventional *Standmotiv*. She wears her customary costume comprised of a



Figure 235: As of Severus Alexander featuring the seated emperor, Virtus, and Victoria on the reverse. 230 CE.

crested helmet, double-belted Amazonian tunic that exposes her right breast, and boots. In her left hand, she carries a *parazonium*. Her right hand remains hidden behind a shield resting on pedestal that is inscribed *VOT X*, alluding to the emperor's *decennalia*. That Virtus stands between the *Vota X* shield and Severus Alexander and gazes back at the emperor holding a victoriola and crowned

by Victoria invites the viewer to recognize that Severus Alexander's ten-year rule of relative stability is affirmed by the

emperor's military capacity, his *virtus Augusti*, which seems to have been claimed (and, perhaps, recognized) as early as 225. This particular issue is also reminiscent of the Arcus Novus Relief, which

⁹ Gneecchi 1912, 98, no. 10 and Tav. 109, no. 4; *idem.* 99, no. 17 and Tav. 109, no. 8; Toynbee 1986, 86. Also, reprised by Probus except with six horses instead of four: Gneecchi 1912, 117, no. 13 and Tav. 119, no. 8; Toynbee 1986, 87.

¹⁰ Mattingly 1962, 74, no. 1. *Profectio (Augusti)* coins were minted in 231 to commemorate his campaign in the east against Persia.

¹¹ *BMCRE Sev. Alex.* 667-71; *RIC 4 Sev. Alex* 510; Grueber 1874, 39; Toynbee 1986, 81.

celebrates the *decennalia* and the *vicennalia* of Diocletian and also lends credence to the identification of Virtus on the relief.



Figure 236: Bronze medallion of Severus Alexander featuring the emperor, Victoria, and Mars on the reverse. Ca. 230 CE.

One last medallion struck by Severus Alexander exhibits a new typology in the repertoire of Virtus Augusti coinage. The reverse depicts the emperor, wearing a cuirass, tunic, and *paludamentum*, advancing forward toward the right with transverse spear in hand (Fig. 236).¹² Behind the emperor stands Victoria, who crowns him with her right hand. Advancing alongside the emperor is Mars, who wears a crested helmet, cuirass, and tunic. He carries a trophy in his right hand and a round shield in his left. The scene is encompassed by the legend

VIRTVS AVGVSTI. The composition is clearly one of victory, i.e. after the successful conclusion of a martial event, attested by the presence of Victoria, who crowns the emperor, as well as the presence of Mars, who carries the *spolia* of the enemy. Mattingly has posited that the Victoria and Virtus medallions struck by Severus Alexander may have been associated with the emperor's Persian triumph celebrated in 233.¹³ The movement of the figures, the iconography of victory, as well as the legend *VIRTVS AVGVSTI* are also suggestive of an *adventus*. And although the goddess Virtus is not depicted, the iconography of this medallion demonstrates the elements that define the *virtus Augusti*, namely, an emperor who has emerged from war as victor and leads his victory back to Rome, made possible by the martial superiority of the emperor, his *virtus Augusti*.

Born into the Severan dynasty, a dynasty founded on the bedrock of *victoria* and *virtus*, it is no great wonder that Severus Alexander was conscientious about his reputation in *virtus*, knowing that it is the military competence of the emperor that maintains a healthy rapport with the armies, and, by proxy,

¹² *BMCRE Sev. Alex.* 785; Gnechi 1912, 83, no. 30 and Tav. 100, no. 6.

¹³ Mattingly 1962, 79. Severus Alexander defeated Artaxerxes in 233, see *HA Sev. Alex.* 50-5.

with the whole of Rome. By the time he was 17 years old in 225, he was already campaigning, attested by his military-themed coinage comprising representations of Fides Militum, Mars, Victoria, and Virtus. And by 233, he had triumphed over the Persians, testifying to his military proficiency.¹⁴ His long reign over a relatively stable empire is a testament to his *virtus Augusti*, which he proactively publicized in his coinage in variations for the same objective, namely that his *virtus* be validated by the people of Rome in order for him to sustain his imperial power.¹⁵ After all, according to the *Historia Augusta*, Severus Alexander is known to have said that *imperium in virtute esse, non in decore*: “imperial authority is based not on splendor, but on martial excellence.”¹⁶



Figure 237: Denarius of Gordian II featuring Virtus on the reverse. Ca. 238 CE.

That *imperium* was established on the foundation of the emperor's *virtus* is corroborated by the so-called Crisis of the Third Century, in which the throne was seized by militant claimants from the Roman armies across the empire after the assassination of Severus Alexander in 235. In 238, the Gordiani continued to mint Virtus coins, the iconography of which was largely borrowed from the Virtus coinage of Severus Alexander. The reverse of several issues minted by Gordian II exhibits Virtus, labeled *VIRTVS AVG* (or *AVGG*), who wears a crested helmet, a single-belted tunic that reveals her right breast, and boots. She brandishes a reverse spear in her left hand and rests her right hand on a round shield (**Fig. 237**).¹⁷

¹⁴ He celebrated a triumph in Rome in September of 233: *HA Sev. Alex.* 56.

¹⁵ After his military campaigns in the east, Severus Alexander was regarded with the greatest affection by the senate and the people of Rome, ergo they approved of the *virtus* of the emperor and of his rule: *HA Sev. Alex.* 59.

¹⁶ *HA Sev. Alex.* 33.

¹⁷ *BMCRE Gord.* 17, 30-2; *RIC 4 Gord.* I 6, 14; *Gord. II* 3, 8; *Gord. III* 12-3, 205, 229.



Figure 238: As of Gordian III featuring the seated emperor, Victoria (right), and Virtus (left). 241 CE.



Figure 239: Bronze medallion of Gordian III featuring the seated emperor, Mars and Virtus (left), and Victoria (right) on the reverse. 242 CE.

On the reverse of a series of aes minted in 241, Gordian III, wearing a cuirass, tunic, and *paludamentum*, is seated on a cuirass (Fig. 238)¹⁸ Victoria stands behind him and crowns the emperor with a laurel wreath. Mars approaches the emperor from the left.¹⁹ He wears a crested helmet, cuirass, military tunic, *paludamentum*, and boots. In his left hand, he holds a round shield and an upright spear, and, in his right, he proffers a laurel branch. Two military standards decorate the background. The legend surrounding the scene reads *VIRTVS AVGVSTI*. Although the goddess Virtus is not depicted in the scene, her presence is invoked through the legend, as well as through the emperor, who possesses the *virtus Augusti* from war and victory. The *virtus Augusti* is, once again, defined by the conclusion of war through Mars *Pacator* and victory through the presence of Victoria. A medallion minted in 242 demonstrates the same scene and the same legend (*VIRTVS AVGVSTI*)

with the addition of the goddess Virtus (Fig. 239).²⁰ Both Mars and Virtus approach the emperor from the left. Mars holds a standard and shield, whereas Virtus holds a standard and her conventional *parazonium*. Victoria crowns the emperor from behind. The addition of Virtus clarifies the context. The conclusion of war (Mars) engendered a victory (Victoria) for the emperor, predicated on his *virtus Augusti* (Virtus). This medallion also represents the last coin type and image of the emperor's military triad of Victoria, Virtus, an Mars together with the emperor, who has commemorated his victory with the creation of this special series minted in two different metals.

¹⁸ RIC 3 Gord. III 326.

¹⁹ The figure at the left could be Mars; however, the figure seems to be unbearded

²⁰ Grueber 1874, 49, no. 17. Gnechi 1912, 93, no. 59 and Tav. 106, no. 10.



Figure 240: Bronze medallion of Gordian featuring a triumphal procession of the emperor, led by Virtus on the reverse.

Gordian III also minted a medallion depicting a triumph modeled on the triumphal iconography of the Triumphator Relief from the Arch of Titus (**Fig. 240**).²¹ The emperor, crowned by Victoria behind him, rides in a triumphal quadriga, guided by Virtus and escorted by a team of lictors. The goddess wears a crested helmet, an Amazonian tunic that divests her right breast, and a pair of boots. She carries a spear in her right hand and pulls the reins of the horses with her left hand. The goddess turns around to gaze at the *triumphator*, as she often does in

her performative role as herald of the emperor in victory scenes.



Figure 241: Bronze medallion of Gordian III featuring the emperor receiving the globe of the earth from Sol and crowned by Virtus on the reverse.

One last Gordian III medallion with the legend *VIRTVS AVGVSTI* depicts the emperor, wearing a cuirass, military skirt, and *paludamentum*, who receives a globe from the god Sol with radiate crown (**Fig. 241**).²² Virtus, wearing a crested helmet and tunic that bares her right breast, carries a round shield in her left hand and crowns the emperor with a laurel wreath from behind with her right. A soldier stands to the left and carries a spear and *vexillum* and three standards decorate the background of the scene. Two prisoners of war

crouch below the emperor. The iconography of the medallion clearly conveys the consequences of the *virtus Augusti*. Not only does the presence of Virtus crowning the emperor characterize the emperor's martial victory, but so do the crouching prisoners of war, diminished in size to demonstrate their lack of

²¹ Gneecchi 1912, 91, no. 33 and Tav. 105, no. 5; Toynee 1986, 86.

²² Grueber 1874, 45, no. 2; Gneecchi 1912, 93, no. 56 and Tav. 106, no. 8.

virtus. Moreover, the emperor's reception of the *orbis terrarum* allegorizes his *imperium* over the empire, made possible by the emperor's martial power, his *virtus Augusti*.

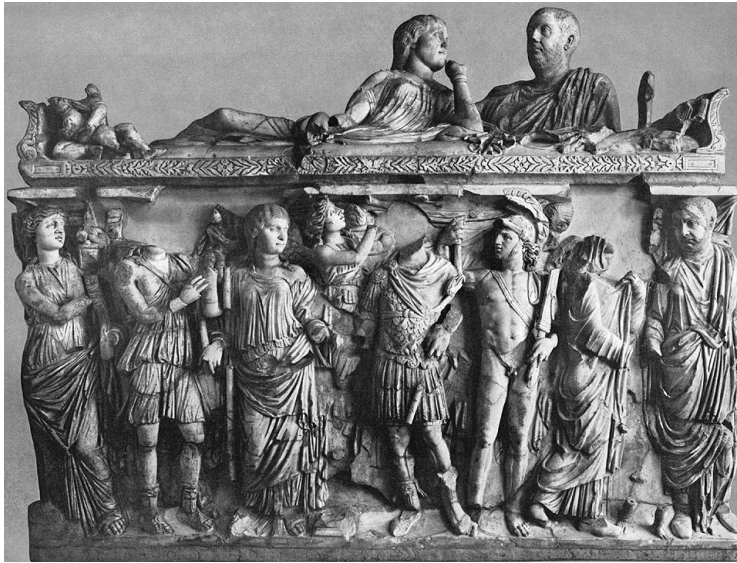


Figure 242: Sarcophagus of Balbinus. Ca. 238 CE.

Although Pupienus and his co-emperor Balbinus had little time to mint their own *Virtus* coinage during their short reign of three months in 238, Balbinus commissioned for himself a marble sarcophagus that represents the *virtus Augusti* (Fig. 242).²³ Balbinus, front and center, is dressed in a scaled cuirass, military tunic with decorative *pteryges*,

and the imperial *paludamentum*. He carries in his left hand an eagle-tipped scepter that characterizes his *imperium*. The emperor makes a sacrifice on an altar (now lost), attended by by his wife in the guise of Venus with a *cupido* on her shoulder, and the gods of martial quality: *Virtus*, *Victoria*, *Mars*, and *Felicitas*. Mars stands to the right of Balbinus in heroic nudity save for a mantle bunched on his left shoulder. He wears a crested Attic helmet and carries a spear in his left hand and a *parazonium* in his right. To the left of Balbinus, *Victoria* crowns the emperor with a victory wreath. *Virtus* stand to the left of Balbinus' wife. Her head is lost; however, she can be identified by her short Amazonian tunic that exposes her right breast, her *balteus*, pelt boots, and the shaft of the *vexillum* she once carried in her left hand. *Felicitas*,

²³ Gütschow, M. 1938. *Das Museum der Prätextatkatankombe*. Memorie: Atti della Pontificia Accademia romana di archeologia (MemPontAcc) 4.2, pp. 77ff., where she erroneously identifies the Amazon goddess as "Roma;" Ryberg 1955, 165, no. 10; Jucker, H. and J.D. Cooney. 1967. *A Portrait Head of the Emperor Balbinus*. The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art, Vol. 54, No. 1, pp 11-16; Reinsberg (1985, 3-16) disputes the association of the sarcophagus with Balbinus: Reinsbeg, C. 1985. *Der Balbinus-Sarkophag, Grablage eines Kaisers?* Marburger Winckelmann-Programm (MarbWPr), pp. 3-16; Meyer, H. 1986. *Zu römischen Umbestattungen (Noch eine Behauptung des Balbinus)*. Bullettino della Commissione Archeologica Comunale di Roma (BullComm), Vol. 91, No. 2, pp. 279-290; Kleiner 1992, 384-5; Milhous 1992, 194-5; Elsner 1998, 148-9; Salathé (2000, 884) also erroneously identifies the Amazon goddess as "Roma;" Salathé, J.P. *Venus and the Representation of Virtue on Third-Century Sarcophagi*. Latomus, T. 59, Fasc. 5, pp. 873-888; Varner 2004, 204, no. 32; Zanker, P. and B.C. Ewald. 2012. *Living with Myths: The Imagery of Roman Sarcophagi*. Oxford, pp. 189-90.

one of Virtus' ideological partners, stands to the left of Virtus and carries a cornucopia in her left hand. That Balbinus desired to be remembered for his military virtues and, above all, his *virtus Augusti* is transparent.²⁴ Moreover, the fact that Virtus participates in a triumphal sacrifice conducted by the emperor lends credence to the identification of Virtus on the Nollekens Relief, as well as on the three Trajanic reliefs depicting a triumphal sacrifice discussed above.



Figure 243: Antoninianus of Philip the Arab featuring Virtus on the reverse. Ca. 244-249 CE.

The coins of Philip the Arab, emperor from 244-249, are mostly derivative, for example on an antoninianus, Virtus, labeled *VIRTVS AVG*, is depicted seated on a cuirass and holding a spear and laurel branch.²⁵ Philip introduces, however, a new series of Virtus coins that relinquishes *virtus* from the sole province of the emperor and accords *virtus* to the armies. On the reverse of a series of antoniniani, Virtus, dressed in a crested helmet, a single-belted Amazonian tunic that reveals her left breast, a mantle, and a pair of pelt boots, stands to the left in a *Standmotiv* (Fig. 243).²⁶ She carries a reverse spear in her right hand and rests her left hand on a round shield. The legend reads *VIRTVS EXERCITVS*, “the *virtus* of the army.” This series marks the first time that the goddess officially represents someone other than the emperor. She is no longer the *Virtus Augusti*, but now exemplifies the martial valor of the collective military force of Rome under Philip the Arab.

²⁴ Kleiner 1992, 385; Milhous (1992, 195) suggests that the presence of Virtus highlights general valor of the deceased, as well as the “wife’s virtue and imparts a special value of *felicitas*.” However, the martial goddess Virtus does not represent general female virtue or *felicitas*. The image of Virtus, which is inherently martial, should not be confused with the characteristic *virtus*, which can have various meanings. That Virtus is coupled with the gods of warfare, Victory and Mars, and carries a *vexillum* makes it clear that only the martial prowess of Balbinus is represented by her image.

²⁵ *RIC 4 Phil.* 53. Reprised by Trajan Decius: *RIC 4 Traj. Dec.* 8, 109, 127.

²⁶ *RIC 4 Phil.* 71, 74. Reprised by several emperors with legend *VIRTVS AVGG*: Gallus: *RIC 4 Gall.* 57-8, 76, 96, 126. Volusian: *RIC 4 Volus.* 162, 186, 186, 187, 206, 263. Gallienus: *RIC 5 Gallien.* (joint reign): 59, 99, 100-1, 114A, 181-3, 199, 247-9, 257, 286, 301, 410-1, 423-4. Gallienus: *RIC 5 Gallien.* 133-4, 325-6, 379, 531-6, 612, 667-8.



Figure 244: Bronze medallion of Philip II featuring the emperor, Virtus, and Mars on the reverse. 247-249 CE.

Sometime during his short reign between 247 and 249, Philip II issued a unique medallion that has no parallel (**Fig. 244**).²⁷ The reverse depicts the young emperor dressed in a cuirass, military tunic, and *paludamentum*. He is flanked by Virtus on the left and Mars on the right. Mars, wearing a crested helmet, cuirass, tunic, and *paludamentum* and carrying a standard and a round shield in his left hand, crowns the emperor with a laurel wreath with his right hand.

Virtus, dressed in a crested helmet, a single-belted Amazonian tunic that exposes her right breast, carries a standard in her left hand and rests her right hand on a shield. Although Victoria is not depicted in this scene, a victory scene is clearly indicated, as well as the emperor's ideological military triad of war, *victoria*, and *virtus*.



Figure 245: Bronze medallion of Trebonianus Gallus featuring an adventus of the emperor, accompanied by Victoria and Virtus on the reverse. 251-253 CE.

Trebonianus Gallus, emperor between 251 and 253 with his son Volusianus, reprised the iconography of a medallion first issued by Gordian I with the legend *VICTORIA AVGVSTI* for his own medallion with the legend *ADVENTVS AVGG* featuring the goddess Virtus (**Fig. 245**).²⁸ On the reverse of the medallion, both Trebonianus Gallus and Volusianus arrive at Rome on horseback during their joint *adventus*. Framing the emperors are Victoria on the left and Virtus on the right. Victoria leads the emperors to the left, proffering a laurel crown.

Virtus, dressed in a crested helmet and Amazonian tunic that bares her breast and carrying a shield in her left hand, follows the emperors from behind. An entourage of soldiers decorate the background, holding two military standards and a *vexillum*, signaling not only the arrival of the emperors, but also their joint

²⁷ Gnechi 1912, 13, no. 7 and Tav. 108, no. 8. The legend reads: *PRINCIPI IVVENTVTIS*.

²⁸ Gnechi 1912, 102, nos. 1, 2 and Tav. 111, nos. 1, 2.

victory, presumably won on the battlefield before returning to Rome. The presence of Virtus in this *adventus* scene testifies that not only does the goddess appear only in victory scenes, but also that Virtus is ideologically associated with an imperial *adventus*, lending credence to the identification of all the Amazon goddesses as Virtus in previous *adventus* scenes. It was the duty of Virtus to return to Rome with the victorious emperor after war as the *Virtus Augusti* (-orum).



Figure 246: Antoninianus of Aemilian featuring Virtus on the reverse. Ca. 253 CE.

Aemilian, Valerian, Gallienus, Quintillus, Carus, and Tetricus minted some of the last Virtus series of non-medallion coins that illustrates Virtus as a female Amazonian goddess in the 3rd century; and only Aemilian, Valerian, and Gallienus produced the last Virtus coinage depicting the Amazon goddess minted in Rome (**Fig. 246**).²⁹ For example,

on the reverse of an antoninianus minted by Aemilian, Virtus, identified by the legend *VIRTVS AVG* and dressed in her Amazonian costume, rests her foot on a helmet and carries a laurel branch. The Virtus archetype remains the same for Valerian and Gallienus with variations on attributes, namely a shield or a victoriola in lieu of a laurel branch.³⁰

Maximian, *Augustus* of the Western Roman Empire between 286 and 305, minted the last



Figure 247: Bronze medallion featuring Maximian on the obverse and Virtus, Moneta, and Felicitas on the reverse. 286-305 CE.

numismatic image of the goddess Virtus in a divine group (**Fig. 247**).³¹ On the obverse of the medallion appears the image of Maximian in profile and wearing an aegis, along with his horse and a shield illustrated with the she-wolf and twins as a shield device. The legend reads

²⁹ *RIC 4 Aemil.* 12, 22, 41, 53; with shield rather than branch: 63. Gallienus: *RIC 5 Gallien.* 330.

³⁰ *RIC 5 Valer.* 3, 23-4, 55-6, 133-6, 136A, 182, 183, 204, 226-7, 270-1. With victoriola: 266-8. *RIC 5 Gallien. (joint reign)* 114A, 181-3, 248-9, 257, 286, 301. *RIC 5 Gallien.* 133.

³¹ Gnechi 1912, 130, no. 25 and Tav. 127, no. 10.

VIRTUS MAXIMIANI AVG, “the *virtus* of Maximian the emperor.” The reverse depicts three female deities framed by the legend *SALVIS AVGG ET CAESS FEL[IX] ORBIS TERR[ARUM]*, “by the health and safety of the *Augusti* and of the *Caesares*, the whole world is happy.” Moneta, identified by the cornucopia in her left hand and a scale in her right, stands in the center, flanked by Felicitas (or Abundantia) on the right and Virtus on the left.³² Virtus is positioned in her canonical *Standmotiv*. She wears a crested helmet and a double-belted Amazonian tunic that exposes her right breast, as well as a pair of pelt boots. In her left hand, she brandishes a spear and, in her right, she holds a victoriola resting on a globe. Beside the goddess is a round shield. The obverse legend *VIRTUS MAXIMIANI AVG* makes it clear that the Amazon goddess is to be identified as Virtus, the goddess of one of the emperor’s intrinsic imperial qualities and the one the emperor chose for the theme of this medallion series.

Maximian’s successor, Galerius, minted dozens of Virtus coins that celebrated not his own inherent *virtus* like his predecessor, but the *virtus* of the army with the legend *VIRTUTI EXERCITVS* or *EXERCITI*, just like Philip the Arab.³³ However, unlike Philip’s coins that depict Virtus, the goddess has been replaced by a male carrying a spear and trophy over his shoulder as either Mars or a personification of the *exercitus* on the Virtus coins of Galerius. Nevertheless, Virtus makes several appearances on Galerius’ monumental arch in Thessaloniki.

VII.II: The Arch of Galerius at Thessaloniki

The iconography of *virtus* in the coinage of Galerius diverges from the iconography of *virtus* on his eponymous arch in Thessaloniki, dedicated in conjunction with Galerius’ *decennalia* in 303. The arch commemorates Galerius’ victory over the Sasanian Persians in the battle of Satala in 298 and celebrates his *virtus* in a programmatic series of panegyric reliefs that extol the emperor’s martial excellence with

³² Stevenson (1982, 712) identifies the figures as “one of the *monetae* standing between a woman and Mars.” However, Toyne (1986, 82, no. 75a) realized that the figure at the left is an Amazon and identifies the goddesses as “Moneta in the centre flanked by Roma (?) or Virtus (?) and Felicitas (?) or Abundantia (?)”

³³ E.g. *RIC 6 Thessalonica* 37a-b, 38a-b, 39a-b.



Figure 248: Arch of Galerius: panel from the north face of the south pier. Ca. 303 CE.

scenes of battles, victory processions, and the subjugation of the Persians.³⁴ The Arch of Galerius represents the emperor's *virtus*, personified as the goddess Virtus, who appears at least three times. A panel from the north face of the south pier illustrates the unification of the empire, attended by the tetrarchs and an assemblage of deities, including Virtus (**Fig. 248**).³⁵ Enthroned in the center are Diocletian and Maximian, flanked by Constantius Chlorus on the left and Galerius on the right. The tetrachs raise the personified Mesopotamia and Armenia (or Syria and Britannia), symbolizing the unification of the far east and the far west by the military successes of the tetrarchy. Isis, Virtus, a Dioscurus, Sarapis, Jupiter, a second Dioscurus, Mars, and Fortuna attend the unification of the empire. In the foreground, Oceanus and Tellus recline in the corners and Caelus and the Orbis Terrarum (or Tigris and Euphrates) rest beneath the tetrarchs.³⁶ Lastly, two winged Victoriae crown two of the emperors with laurel wreaths, signifying their military victories. Mars, dressed in a crest helmet, cuirass, military tunic with decorative pteryges carries a trophy in his right hand that rests over his right shoulder. With his left hand, he pulls the reins of a horse behind him, either belonging to the Dioscurus, or, more likely, to one of the emperors. Virtus (marked with an arrow), dressed in a crested helmet, single-belted Amazonian tunic that reveals her right breast, and balteus slung over her right shoulder, carries a trophy in her left hand that rests over her left

³⁴ Ryberg 1955, 139; Hannestad 1986, 313-4; Kleiner 1992, 418-25; Canepa 2009, 83-99. For a comprehensive overview of the Arch of Galerius cf. Laubscher, H.P. 1975. *Der Reliefschmuck des Galeriusbogens in Thessaloniki*. Archäologische Forschungen-Deutsches archäologisches Institut, Berlin.

³⁵ Pond Rothman 1977, 444; Meyer 1980, 417; Milhous 1992, 336-7.

³⁶ Kleiner 1992, 422.

shoulder.³⁷ With her right hand, she pulls the reins of the horse behind her, just like Mars. That Mars and Virtus pull the reins of the horses is not unprecedented: medallions minted by Severus Alexander and Philip the Arab, discussed above, reflect this imperial duty conferred upon both Mars and Virtus in scenes of victory. Together Mars and Virtus represent two military pendants that define the martial theme of the unification of the empire, predicated on war and the martial excellence of the four emperors, who consolidated the provinces of the empire with the co-operation of the tetrarchy and their armies. Moreover, Canepa postulates that the scene depicts the living *Augusti* as apotheosized *kosmokratores*, whose command transcends the earth and reaches the heavens.³⁸ If this were the case, then the presence of Virtus, who was the goddess who led those endowed with her gift to the heavens, was an apposite addition to the tetrarchic apotheosis founded on the emperors' collective *virtus* achieved on the earth.

A panel from the east face of the south pier depicts Virtus in a scene demonstrating Galerius' reception of a Persian delegation (**Fig. 249**).³⁹ On the left side of the scene, Galerius, surrounded by bodyguards, receives the delegation of kneeling Persians, likely suing for peace. On the right side, a prominent Virtus stands in front of five *Tychai* of cities of the empire who bear witness to the Persian



Figure 249: Arch of Galerius: panel from the east face of the south pier. Ca. 303 CE.

petition for peace. The head of Virtus is unfortunately defaced; however, her identity can be secured by

³⁷ L'Orange (1965, 93) names the goddess "Rome."

³⁸ Canepa 2009, 92. Cf. also Hannestad 1986, 317.

³⁹ Pond Rothman 1977, 439-40; Milhous 1992, 337.

her iconography as well as the context of the scene.⁴⁰ The goddess is positioned in a traditional *Standmotiv*. She wears a double-belted Amazonian tunic that bares her right breast and a pair of pelt boots. A balteus is strapped around her right shoulder, which must have carried a *parazonium* at her left hip. Whatever attributes she may have held in her hands are lost; however, her left hand appears to grasp the end of a rounded object, perhaps the hilt of her *parazonium*.⁴¹ In the right-hand corner of the scene, a small female figure crouches in mourning. She is likely the personification of Persia *Devicta*, devoid of her *virtus*.⁴² The presence of Persia *Devicta* lends credence to the identification of the Amazon goddess as Virtus, who appears as the visual pendant to Galerius on the left-hand side of the scene. The shield of the emperor, carried by an attendant or soldier behind the emperor, depicts an image of Hercules as another visual reference to *virtus* within the composition. The coupling of Virtus and emperor with Hercules shield, both of whom frame the subjugated Persians who kneel before them, articulates the military strength of Galerius, whose *virtus* prolongs the peace in the east at the behest of the supplicating Persians on their knees, bereft of their *virtus*.

The last panel featuring Virtus is located on the south face of the south pier that celebrated the *decennalia* of Galerius in 303 (Fig. 250).⁴³ Two *Victoriae* flank and hold a large *clipeus*, likely once inscribed with a legend defining the *decennalia*, perhaps with an “X.” Flanking the *Victoriae* and *clipeus* are two large trees, from which Persian weapons hang. Below these trophy-like trees, several subjugated barbarians crouch – a visual motif of *virtus* that reaches back to Julius Caesar. Framing the scene are two

⁴⁰ Pond Rothman (1977, 440) identifies the Amazon goddess as Roma. Meyer (1980, 399-400) identifies the goddess as “Roma-Virtus,” as well as “Virtus des Galerius;” however, as Milhous (1992, 338) has noted, there is no evidence for the combination of such a figure. The two goddesses may resemble one another, but they are entirely distinct in each proper context. Thus, the conceptualization of a “Roma-Virtus” figure should be avoided. Kleiner (1992, 423) states the possibility of Roma or Virtus. Milhous (1992, 337-8) opines that either Roma or Virtus could be depicted depending on the interpretation of the context of the scene. Roma does, however, appear on the Arch of Galerius. On the northwestern side of the southwest pillar, Roma, albeit weathered, appears as a seated matron type.

⁴¹ Meyer (1980, 399) suggests that she is carrying a battle-axe in her left hand and a *pelta lunata*, or lunate shield (a common attribute of the Amazons) in her right hand; however, there is no indication of anything surviving in her hands. Moreover, Virtus should not be associated with the common attributes of Greek Amazons, since she is not a Greek Amazon, but a Roman goddess with her own set of Roman attributes.

⁴² Pond Rothman 1977, 440.

⁴³ Pond Rothman 1977, 447; Meyer 1980, 435; Kleiner 1992, 424; Milhous 1992, 336-7.



Figure 250: Arch of Galerius: panel from the south face of the south pier. Ca. 303 CE.

trophies comprised of helmets, spears, and oval shields, as well as Mars on the left and Virtus on the right (marked with an arrow). Virtus is partially abraded, but enough of her attributes remain to secure her identity. The goddess wears a crested helmet and her traditional Amazonian tunic that exposes her right breast. The attribute that she once held in her left hand no longer survives; and her right hand is placed on the head of a defeated Persian, symboling the fact that the emperor's *virtus* conquered the *virtus* of his enemies. The presence of Victoria, Mars, and Virtus once again attests to the use of the emperor's martial triad in scenes of victory that emblemizes the emperor's military superiority in warfare. And the goddess Virtus herself, displayed in an act of subjugating the enemy, represents the fact that the emperor's *virtus* still remains *invicta*, in life and in death.

VII.III: The Constantinian Frieze of the Arch of Constantine in Rome



Figure 251: Coin of Constantine featuring Virtus on the reverse. Ca. 307/8 CE.

The final images of the goddess Virtus were produced by Constantine. When Galerius died in 311, the empire was already politically fractured. No longer was there a unified tetrarchy, but four disparate emperors vying for power over the ruptured state: Maxentius, Maximinus II, Licinius, and Constantine. The mint at Lugdunum struck one of the last coins depicting the goddess Virtus in conjunction with their emperor, Constantine, in 307/8

and again in 314/5. A bust of a laureate Constantine is emblazoned on the obverse; and, on the reverse, Virtus, accompanied by the legend *VIRT PERP CONSTANTINI AVG*, “everlasting *virtus* of the Emperor Constantine” (Fig. 251).⁴⁴ Virtus wears her conventional martial uniform: a crested helmet, a double-belted Amazonian tunic that uncovers her right breast, and a pair of pelt boots. In her left hand, she brandishes a transverse spear and, in her right, she holds a victoriola standing on a globe and offering Virtus a laurel crown. Behind the left leg of Virtus rests a round shield; and, next to her right leg sits a captive with his hand bound behind his back. He turns his head around to gaze up at the goddess, with the intention of recognizing the emperor’s *virtus* that conquered his own. The motive of this issue is not entirely clear; however, by 308, the tetrarchy began its inevitable collapse.

Galerius’ former *Caesar* in the east, Maximinus II and Licinius, whom Galerius made *Augustus* in the west, entered into an agreement to divide the eastern half of the empire among themselves. Maximinus II entered into an alliance with Maxentius, the emperor in the east; and Licinius and Constantine, the emperor in the west, forged an alliance against Maximinus II and Maxentius. War was unavoidable. In the early part of 312, Constantine crossed the Alps from the north with 35,000-40,000 troops and descended into the Italian peninsula.⁴⁵ Having besieged Susa, Mediolanum, Verona, Aquileia, Mutina, and Ravenna, he continued to Rome, where he arrived toward the end of the year.⁴⁶ In preparation for the a siege at Rome, Maxentius ordered that all bridges across the Tiber be severed and that a temporary pontoon bridge be constructed across the Tiber near the Milvian Bridge on the Via Flaminia.⁴⁷ Maxentius and the garrison armies crossed the Tiber and met Constantine on the north bank of the river. On the 28th of October, the Constantinian forces decimated the armies of Maxentius and repelled them back to the river. Maxentius and the Roman garrisons retreated to the pontoon bridge,

⁴⁴ *RIC 6 Lugdunum* 285, 302-3; *RIC 7 Lugdunum* 29.

⁴⁵ Smith 1971, 107; Barnes 2011, 81.

⁴⁶ Smith 1971, 107-9; Barnes 2011, 81-2; Potter 2013, 138-42.

⁴⁷ Smith 1971, 110; Barnes 2011, 82-3; Van Dam 2011, 2.

which collapsed under their weight, drowning many of them, including Maxentius.⁴⁸ On the 29th, Constantine entered the city of Rome and orchestrated a triumphal *adventus*.⁴⁹

To commemorate his victory over Maxentius, Constantine minted an issue of Virtus coins in Rome depicting the last image of the goddess Virtus in Roman coinage. The reverse of Constantine's Virtus coin depicts the goddess as she originally appeared on her earliest coin type first produced in Rome by Marcellinus in 101/0 BCE, demonstrating a continuity of her image and its recognition by the Romans over



Figure 252: Coin of Constantine featuring Virtus on the reverse. Ca. 312 CE.

the span of four hundred years (**Fig. 252**). Virtus is positioned in her canonical *Standmotiv*.⁵⁰ She dons a crested helmet and wears a double-belted Amazonian tunic that divests her right breast and a pair of pelt boots. In her left arm, she cradles a *parazonium* and wields a reverse spear in her right. The legend reads *VIRT EXERC GALL*, “the *virtus* of the Gallic army.” The Gallic army refers to the forces led by

Constantine which battled at the Milvian Bridge and defeated

Maxentius; and the commendation of the armies is doubtless a reflection of the emperor's own *virtus*, just as Caesar praised the *virtus* of his armies to amplify his own reputation in *virtus*. This was the last image of Virtus produced in Roman coinage, but not the last image of Virtus produced in Rome. An original frieze on the Arch of Constantine depicts the last image of Virtus in stone, whose presence is represented in the relief portraying the Battle of the Milvian Bridge.

The Arch of Constantine was dedicated in 315 on the anniversary of Constantine's *decennalia* of his accession to power and celebrated the emperor's martial victory over Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge

⁴⁸ Smith 1971, 112; Potter 2013, 143-4.

⁴⁹ Smith 1971, 112; Barnes 2011, 83; Van Dam 2001, 2. The “triumph” scene in the Constantinian frieze of the Arch of Constantine has been argued to be the emperor's *adventus* after the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, especially since Constantine never celebrated a proper triumph in Rome, cf. Koepfel 1990, 51-6.

⁵⁰ *RIC 6 Rome* 359-60.



Figure 253: Arch of Constantine: Battle of the Milvian Bridge. Ca. 315 CE.

three years before.⁵¹ Although many of the reliefs decorating the arch are *spolia* taken from other imperial monuments around Rome, the continuous frieze in which the Battle of the Milvian Bridge is depicted is generally considered to be Constantinian.⁵² The Battle of the Milvian Bridge is portrayed on the south wall of the arch (**Fig. 253**). Having been routed to the north bank of the Tiber, Maxentius, and the Romans attempted to retreat across the pontoon bridge, which collapsed under their weight. Thus, the relief depicts Constantine's Gallic armies battling Maxentius' troops, who drown in the Tiber River below. To the far left of the battle stands Constantine on a part of the bridge, under which the river flows. A bearded personification of the Tiber rises from the water just below where the emperor stands. Constantine has been completely removed from the relief; however, the remains of his outline, as well as his left leg and the lower part of his military tunic, remain. Whatever he was depicted doing during the battle is inscrutable; however, that he was illustrated as a victorious emperor is

⁵¹ Smith 1971, 115.

⁵² Despite objections from Wace (1907, 270-6) (followed by Knudsen 1989, 267-8), who, in 1907, attempted to argue that four of the six scenes are not originally Constantinian and that only the two scenes depicting the Siege at Verona and the Battle of the Milvian Bridge are Constantinian on the grounds that he only counted four representations of the emperor rather than six. Milhous (1992, 334-5) believes that the entire continuous frieze is spoliated, including the Battle of the Milvian Bridge scene. In 1913, Frothingham (1913, 489-90) rejected Wace's claim that only partial scenes of the historical frieze are Constantinian and the majority of it derives from some other monument on the grounds that: the same hand can be attested throughout; that the length of each scene is fitted appropriately to their current position without interruption; and that the scene representing the Battle of the Milvian Bridge did portray an image of the emperor, albeit currently destroyed. For recent comprehensive studies of the Arch of Constantine as a whole, cf. Marlowe, E. 2006. *Framing the Sun: The Arch of Constantine and the Roman Cityscape*. The Art Bulletin, Vol. 88, No. 2, pp. 223-242; Elsner, J. 2000. *From the Culture of Spolia to the Cult of Relics: The Arch of Constantine and the Genesis of Late Antique Forms*. Papers of the British School at Rome, Vol. 68, pp. 149-184.

corroborated by the two female divinities who frame him: Victoria on the right and Virtus on the left.⁵³ Victoria is proceeding toward the right. She turns her head back to gaze at the emperor behind her. Flanking the other side of Constantine is Virtus, who is easily identifiable by her iconography, as well as the context of the scene.

Virtus wears her canonical crested Attic helmet, a double-belted tunic that leaves the right side of her upper chest exposed, and a pair of pelt boots. Her hands are broken, obscuring her original attributes; however, a partial rim of a round shield can be seen behind her left shoulder. Virtus is paired with the emperor and partnered with Victoria in a victory scene, therefore, she cannot be Roma. Moreover, if the Amazon goddess were Roma, she is standing on the wrong side of the Tiber River, as the movement across the river suggest that Roma lies on the right side. And the fact that Victoria, Constantine, and Virtus proceed forward toward the city of Rome suggests that the iconography was appropriated from earlier *adventus* scenes, which illustrate the victorious arrival of the emperor moving toward Rome and accompanied by Victoria and Virtus. In fact, two reliefs appropriated from other monuments for the Arch of Constantine are the Great Trajanic Frieze and the Aurelian Adventus Panel Relief, both of which portray *adventus* scenes with Virtus, the emperor, and Victoria. The Great Trajanic Frieze depicts an ensuing battle to the right and Virtus, Trajan, and Victoria to the left, all proceeding toward Rome. And the Aurelian Adventus Panel Relief shows Marcus Aurelius entering Rome on foot, escorted by Virtus and Victoria. That the artists of the Constantinian frieze were influenced by the *adventus* iconography of the monuments which they spoliated for the Arch of Constantine is transparent.

⁵³ Frothingham 1913, 492-3; Koeppl 1990, 47-8; Milhous 1992, 334-5. *Contra* L'Orange (1939, 66, 70, no. 1), who believes the Amazon goddess can only be Roma because only Roma joins him in battle. However, Roma never goes to battle. And, moreover, because Victoria is present, the battle has already been won by Constantine, therefore, the presence of Virtus is neither surprising nor inexplicable. The scene could be considered a conflated narrative, similar to the way in which Trajan, Victoria, and Virtus appear together on the Great Trajanic Frieze, directly contiguous with a great battle scene against the Dacians.

Thus, the context of the scene is clear: Victoria and Virtus appear as the Battle of the Milvian Bridge concludes to the right. The Roman viewer of the battle was already conscious of the fact that Constantine emerged victorious and, therefore, the images of Victoria and Virtus came to be expected in the city of Rome. Victoria demonstrates the success of Constantine's war waged against Maxentius and Virtus demonstrates the superiority of Constantine's martial capacity, as well as that of his soldiers, without whose *virtus* victory would not have been possible. Thus, the bravery of the Gallic soldiers on the battlefield earned the right for Virtus to appear, whose presence lets the Roman viewer know that the goddess of martial excellence has chosen to side with Constantine and not with Maxentius. It is Virtus who not only invites the viewer to recognize the emperor's martial supremacy as the new leader of Rome, but who also symbolizes the singular virtue which almost every *imperator* of Rome strove to achieve during their respective sovereignties: martial glory. It is known that there are no visual representations of *gloria* of the emperor in Roman iconography, but, in fact, there is one, and her name was Virtus.



Figure 254: Solidus minted in Nicomedia featuring Virtus and bound captives on the reverse. 328/9 CE.

The last image ever created of the goddess Virtus was not produced in Rome, but rather in Nicomedia in 328/9.⁵⁴ The obverse of a solidus depicts the Amazon goddess depicted in every attribute that defines Virtus with the addition of a new legend: *GLORIA CONSTANTINI AVG*, “the glory of Constantine the emperor” (Fig. 254). The iconography of the issue is a resumption of the last image of Virtus produced in Lugdunum for Constantine. Virtus is positioned in a *Standmotiv*. She wears

a crested helmet, a single-belted tunic that exposes her left breast, and pelt boots. In her left hand, she brandishes an upright spear and wields a victoriola mounted on a globe and projecting a laurel crown

⁵⁴ RIC 7 Nicomedia 132, 151.

toward Virtus in her right. The right foot of Virtus is place on one of two fettered captives seated on the ground. The despondent captives are forced to turn their head back toward the goddess and gaze at the *virtus* of the Roman emperor which has conquered them, deprived of their own *virtus*. The iconography of the scene likely refers to the ultimate defeat of Licinius, who surrendered to Constantine in Nicomedia in 324 – the year in which Constantine became the sole emperor of the entire Roman Empire. That the image of Virtus has always represented not only the military excellence of the Roman emperor, but also his martial glory is disambiguated by this Nicomedian issue. The value of Virtus has never changed since her image was conceptualized by Marcellus in 208 BCE for his cult statue of the goddess to whom he conferred cult status. The image of the goddess not only measured the martial qualification of a commander's capacity to rule as a military leader, but, for the emperor of Rome, Virtus was the ultimate badge of martial glory.

Conclusion:

In the fifth book of the *Historia Nova*, the Byzantine historian Zosimus recounts the sack of Rome by Alaric and the Visigoths in 410 CE, during which the Romans toppled the city's sacred statues of the gods, including one of Virtus, in order to melt them down to pay for their ransom. Zosimus states, "And since everything contributed to the ruin of the city, they [the Romans] not only stripped their sacred statues, but also melted those made of gold and silver. Among these was that [statue] of martial valor (τῆς ἀνδρείας), which the Romans call 'Virtus.' And with this being destroyed, whatever was left of Roman *virtus* and excellence was extinguished."⁵⁵ It is unclear which statue of Virtus Zosimus references or where in Rome it was located. However, what is clear here is that Zosimus understood this statue of Virtus to be an metaphorical representation of Rome's long-enduring military might. Zosimus used the toppling of the statue of Virtus in his account to allegorize the fall of Rome, which could not remain standing without her martial *virtus*. Zosimus' anecdote is analogous to the way in which the Romans had always understood the image of Virtus to be a visual representation of their individual and collective martial superiority and symbol of their martial glory, at least until the goddess' ultimate demise in 410. The goddess Virtus is never again mentioned in the literary record.

However, what is mentioned in the literary sources that is quite unique and unusual is a single speech given by the goddess Virtus herself about herself and her existence. Her speech succinctly summarizes my dissertation as she narrates the purpose of her divinity and stresses the importance and consequences of earning her divine gift in warfare against Rome's foreign adversaries. In this speech, written by Silius Italicus in the late-1st century CE, Virtus confronts the goddess Voluptas (Desire), who is pitched as Virtus' divine opponent as they both advise Scipio Africanus on how to proceed with the Punic Wars. According to Silius Italicus, Scipio is resting under the shadow of a laurel tree when Virtus

⁵⁵ Zos. HN. 5.41.7: ἐπεὶ δὲ πανταχόθεν ἴδει τὰ φέροντα πρὸς ἀπώλειαν τῆς πόλεως συνδραμεῖν, οὐκ ἀπεκόσμησαν τὰ ἀγάλματα μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐχώνευσάν τινα τῶν ἐκ χρυσοῦ καὶ ἀργύρου πεποιημένων, ὧν ἦν καὶ τὸ τῆς ἀνδρείας, ἣν καλοῦσι Ῥωμαῖοι VIRTUTEM. οὐπὲρ διαφθαρέντος, ὅσα τῆς ἀνδρείας ἦν καὶ ἀρετῆς παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις ἀπέσθη.

and Voluptas appear before him. Voluptas wears a beautiful purple and gold Tyrian robe, and smells of sweet Persian perfumes, whereas Virtus is described as having a modest appearance and manlike face and gait.⁵⁶ Voluptas speaks first and attempts to convince Scipio that living a long life of pleasure is better than dying young on the battlefield.⁵⁷ Virtus rebuts Voluptas' advice and offers Scipio a life devoid of obscurity and the pursuance of happiness and immortality through fame and martial glory, obtained only through victory on the battlefield. Virtus responds to Voluptas: "How," she states, "can you lure this young man from the prime of his age to a life lived in obscurity? ... For Nature herself attributed men as lesser gods to this earth; but with her firm laws, she has condemned degenerate souls to the darkness of Avernus. But, on the other hand, the gate of heaven lies open for those who were born with this divine virtue: [*virtus*]. Ought I remind you of the son of Amphytrion, [Hercules], who defeated all monsters [with this virtue]? Or of Liber, whose Caucasian tigers pulled his chariot through the towns after he came back from the east in triumph, having conquered the Chinese and the Indians? Or of Quirinus and his brothers from Leda [Castor and Pollux], to whom sailors call in great distress? ... Come now, this man [Scipio] was born for praises, if he should himself seize these divine gifts; and happy is he who is born for the accolades of men. Look now for a moment, as I shall not go too far back for an example, Rome was not once inferior to the threatening Fidenae (Sabines), and was content with the growth of her Asylum [on the Capitoline], raised by the hands of her people. Remember the other cities too, which flourished far and wide, but were destroyed by luxury. For neither the ire of the gods nor the spears of the enemy are as deadly to life as Voluptas is alone when she infects the mind. Drunkenness, a disdainful companion of yours, and Luxury, and always dark-winged Disgrace fly around you. Those with me are Honor (Honor), Praise (Laudes), Renown (Decus), Glory (Gloria) with a joyful expression, and always Victory (Victoria), with matching snow-white wings. And, of course, Triumph (Triumphus), crowned with

⁵⁶ Sil. Ital. *Pun.* 15.28-31.

⁵⁷ Sil. Ital. *Pun.* 15.32-67.

laurel, leads me to the stars. My household is pure, and sits atop a lofty hill, and a steep track leads to my domain by a rocky incline. It is difficult at first and you must work hard, as it is not my way to deceive you. In seeking to enter, you must exert yourself, and you must not consider those things that treacherous Luck (Fors) gives and can take away as good things ... You ought to experience all of those things opposite of the coaxing things which Voluptas promises ... You will also cultivate justice in practice and come to know that the gods judge and stand as witnesses to every deed. Then, whenever the dangers of our country and our affairs demand it, you will first take up arms and first breach the walls of the enemy. Neither iron nor gold will conquer your mind. I will, however, give to you, not garments dyed with Tyrian purple, nor the gift of fragrant perfumes made for a soft man, but the power to overcome your enemies, who are now threatening the empire with war. You will destroy the Carthaginians and place your proud laurels on the lap of Jupiter.”⁵⁸

Written in the Flavian period – a time in which the image of Virtus reached its greatest extent in Roman visual culture – Silius Italicus’ anecdote on Virtus articulates the Roman perception of the goddess’ meaning and purpose, which are more or less congruous with her visual representations in Roman art, especially in visual narratives of victory and triumph. Virtus states that the possessor of her gift is removed from obscurity through recognition and accomplishment as reward for his hard work in

⁵⁸ Sil. Ital. *Pun.* 15.69ff: Virtus: “quasnam iuvenem florentibus,” inquit, “pellicis in fraudes annis vitaeque tenebras...? tribuit namque ipsa minores hos terris Natura deos; sed foedere certodegeneres tenebris animas damnavit Avernis. at, quis aetherii servatur seminis ortus, caeli porta patet. referam quid cuncta domantem Amphitryoniaden? quid, cui, post Seras et Indos captivo Liber cum signa referret ab Euro, Caucaseae currum duxere per oppida tigres? quid suspiratos magno in discrimine nautis Ledaeos referam fratres vestrumque Quirinum? ad laudes genitum, capiat si munera divum, felix ad laudes hominum genus, huc, age, paulum aspice—nec longe repetam—modo Roma minanti impar Fidenae contentaque crescere asylo, quo sese extulerit dextris; idem aspice, late florentes quondam luxus quas verterit urbes. quippe nec ira deum tantum nec tela nec hostes, quantum sola nocens animis illapsa, Voluptas. Ebrietas tibi foeda comes, tibi Luxus et atris circa te semper volitans Infamia pennis; mecum Honor ac Laudes et laeto Gloria vultuet Decus ac niveis Victoria concolor alis. me cinctus lauro producit ad astra Triumphus. casta mihi domus et celso stant colle penates, ardua saxoso perducit semita clivo. asper principio—neque enim mihi fallere mos est—prosequitur labor: annitendum intrare volenti, nec bona censendum, quae Fors infida dedisse atque eadem rapuisse valet ... omnia contra experienda manent quam spondet blanda Voluptas ... idem iustitiae cultor, quaecumque capesses, testes factorum stare arbitrabere divos. tunc, quotiens patriae rerumque pericula poscent, arma feres primus; primus te in moenia tolles hostica; nec ferro mentem vincere nec auro. hinc tibi non Tyrio vitiatas murice vestes, nec donum deforme viro fragrantis amomi, sed dabo, qui vestrum saevo nunc Marte fatigat imperium, superare manu laurumque superbam in gremio Iovis excisis deponere Poenis.”

warfare. Furthermore, Virtus lists her companions: Honor, Laudes, Decus, Gloria, and Victoria, and Triumphus, representing honor, praise, renown, glory, victory, and triumph. These are the virtues of the goddess, which, as I have argued, were first extolled by Marcellus after he defeated Rome's foreign enemies and invented the image of Virtus for his Temple of Honos and Virtus at the Porta Capena. Marius, Pompey, Caesar, and the emperors of Rome also recognized these virtues associated with Virtus and that Virtus alone led each of them, imbued with her divine gift, back to the city of Rome after victory to place the laurels on the lap of Jupiter and subsequently to her celestial abode after death.

But it was really Caesar who first defined and delineated martial *virtus* for us in his *de Bello Gallico*, which set the stage for Augustus and subsequent emperors to strive to obtain *virtus* on the battlefield both necessarily and unnecessarily in order to attain political honor, praise, renown, glory, victory, and triumph with the goal of achieving immortality in the collective memory of the Roman people. The attributes of *virtus* is clear in *de Bello Gallico* and made much more transparent in the visual language of the goddess during the imperial period, namely through coins and state-sponsored reliefs. Almost every single emperor of Rome claimed *virtus* for himself, attested by Roman coinage minted over three centuries. And those with the greatest military records, means, and/or absolute determination to claim *virtus* for themselves propagated images of Virtus in stone for all to view and acknowledge these principal glories of the emperor. From the Ara Pacis, to the Medinaceli Reliefs, to the Arch of Titus, to the Cancelleria Reliefs, to the Great Trajanic Reliefs, to the Aurelian Reliefs, to the Quadrifrons of Septimius Severus, to the Arch of Constantine, and with every Virtus coin in between, it is clear that Virtus was an integral figure in *adventus*, victory, and triumph scenes. It was Virtus' performative duty both to appear after victory had been obtained and to lead the emperor back to the capital or through a triumphal procession as victor and savior of Rome on his way to deliver the laurels to Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline Hill. To the people of Rome, Virtus would have been recognized as the goddess of the emperors' martial excellence that defended Rome from her

adversaries and secured peace across the empire. And to the Roman emperor, Virtus was not only the sole guarantor of honor, praise, renown, glory, victory, and triumph on the lofty hills of Rome, but she was also his key to eternal life on the lofty hills of heaven.

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- Zahran, Y. 2000. *Septimius Severus: Countdown to Death*. Stacey International, London.
- Zanker, P. 2016. *Greek Art in Rome: A New Center in the First Century B.C.*, in C.A. Picón. and S. Hemingway (eds.). *Pergamon and the Hellenistic Kingdoms of the Ancient World*. Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yale University Press.
- 1988. *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (tr. A. Shapiro). University of Michigan.
- Zawadzka, A. 2009. *Gallic Horned Helmets on Roman Republican Coins*. *Archeologica* 60, pp. 35-43.
- Ziolkowski, A. 1992. *The Temples of Mid-Republican Rome and their Historical and Topographical Context*. Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider.
- Zografou, M. 1972. *Amazons in Homer and Hesiod: A Historical Reconstruction*. Athens.

Curriculum Vitae

EDUCATION

Johns Hopkins University

Ph.D. in Classics 2020

Dissertation: "Dea Virtus: Martial Glory as Divinity in the Literary and Visual Culture of Ancient Rome,"
advised by Alan Shapiro

Research Areas: Classical art & archaeology, political iconography in Greece and Rome, Greek and
Roman mythology, Latin prose, Greek drama, Etruscan art

Fulbright Scholar, Institut für Klassische Archäologie, Freie Universität, Berlin, Germany 2016–2017

The American Academy in Rome Classical Summer School 2014

The American School of Classical Studies at Athens Summer Session 2013

University of Freiburg Classical Archaeology Summer Exchange Program, Freiburg, Germany 2012

University of Colorado, Boulder

B.A. in Classics and Anthropology 2011

Honors Thesis: "An Iconographical Study of Helen and Paris Alexandros in Etruscan Art"

Foreign exchange student at Lycée Ste. Famille in Amiens, France 2004-2005

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Johns Hopkins University

*all as instructor unless otherwise designated

"Gods, Heroes, and Monsters: Greek Mythology through the Visual Arts" Winter 2015-2020

"Greek Civilization" Fall 2019

"Art, Politics, and Propaganda in Ancient Rome: A Freshman Seminar" Fall 2019

"Intermediate Latin" Fall 2018

"Introduction to Latin II" Spring 2018

"Seminar in Propaganda and the Art of Visual Politics during the Roman Empire" Fall 2017

"Constructing an Empire: An Introduction to the Art & Archaeology of Ancient Rome" Fall 2015

"Introduction to Latin II" Spring 2015

"Introduction to Latin I" Fall 2014

"Ancient Greek Mythology: Art, Literature, and Mythmaking" (co-instructor) Spring 2014

"Digging up the Gods: Archaeology of Roman Sanctuaries" (teaching assistant) Fall 2013

The Mirman School, Los Angeles, CA

Classics Teacher Fall 2020 - Present

The Gilman School, Baltimore, MD

Latin Teacher (part-time) Fall 2017 – Spring 2020

AWARDS

Johns Hopkins University

Basil Gildersleeve Named Fellow of Classics 2019 – 2020

Intersession Teaching Fellowship Winter 2020

Dean's Teaching Prize Fellowship (DTPF) Fall 2019

Intersession Teaching Fellowship Winter 2019

Dean's Teaching Fellowship (DTF) Fall 2017

Fulbright Research Grant	2016 – 2017
Edelstein Memorial Fellowship for the Goethe Institute (declined)	Summer 2016
Special Opportunities for Undergraduate Learning (SOUL) Teaching Fellowship	Fall 2015
The Singleton Center for Italian Studies Research Fellowship	Summer 2015
Edelstein Memorial Fellowship for the Portus Project Excavation	Summer 2015
Interession Teaching Fellowship	Winter 2015
Edelstein Memorial Fellowship: American Academy in Rome Summer School	Summer 2014
Edelstein Memorial Fellowship: ASCSA Summer School	Summer 2013
Freiburg University Archaeological Exchange Grant	Summer 2012

University of Colorado, Boulder

The Ann Nichols Scholarship of Classics	2010 – 2011
UCB Gold Grant	2010 – 2011
The Romulus Grant of Classics	2009 – 2010
UCB Gold Grant	2008 – 2010

PRESENTATIONS

Conference Papers

“The Performative Role of Virtus on the Medinaceli Reliefs”	
AIA Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA	2019
“The Rape of Persephone and the Death of Soteris: A Case of Roman Fresco Fragments and a Funerary Epitaph from a Roman Columbarium”	
AIA Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA	2016
“The Rape of Persephone and the Death of Soteris: A Case of Roman Fresco Fragments and a Funerary Epitaph from a Roman Columbarium in the Johns Hopkins University Archaeological Museum”	
Johns Hopkins University Museum Symposium of 2015	2015
“The Ovatio of Nerva: The Recontextualization of Domitian’s Ovatio on Frieze A of the Cancelleria Reliefs” Freiburg University Student Conference, Freiburg, Germany	
2012	

GUEST LECTURES

“Virtus, Roma, and the Cancelleria Reliefs”	
Guest lecturer for the graduate seminar “Flavische Kunst” by Professor Lorenz Winkler-Horacek at the Freie Universität, Berlin	2017
“The Origins of Virtus in Roman Art”	
Institut für Klassische Archäologie at the Freie Universität, Berlin.	2016
“Personifications in Roman Art”	
Guest lecturer for the graduate seminar “Neue Funde und Forschungen in der römischen Archäologie” by Professor Monika Trümper at the Freie Universität, Berlin.	2016
“Amazon Warriors”	
Guest lecturer on the Ancient Amazons for the undergraduate course “Warrior Women” by Instructor Janet Gomez at Johns Hopkins University	2015
“Walls and Floors: A Roman Emblema Mosaic and Five Fresco Fragments in the Johns Hopkins Archaeological Museum”	
The Johns Hopkins University Archaeological Museum Talk Series	2014

PUBLICATIONS

“Martial Valor as Divinity on the Sebasteion of Aphrodisias”

ACADEMIC SERVICE

Johns Hopkins University National Fellowship Program

Interviewer

Fall 2017-Fall 2019

Interviewed undergraduate students on their Fulbright project proposals for the Fulbright grant

Johns Hopkins University Graduate Admissions Office

Interim Administrative Coordinator

Spring 2016

Johns Hopkins University Classics Department

Co-chair of the Johns Hopkins Department of Classics Graduate Student Conference titled "Beauty in the Beast: Mutants, Monsters and Monstrosities in the Ancient World." Keynote Speaker: Dr. Robert

Garland (Colgate University)

Spring 2015

Co-chair of the Poultney Lecture Series (Johns Hopkins Classics Department)

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Jennifer Trimble (Stanford)

Spring 2013

EXCAVATIONS

The Portus Project, Portus, Fiumicino, Italy (University of Southampton)

2015 – 2018

EXHIBITIONS

"Walls and Floors: The Roman House at Hopkins at the Johns Hopkins University Archaeological Museum" (JHUAM)

2013

LANGUAGES

Ancient languages read: Latin, Greek

Modern languages spoken: French, German, Italian